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# **ART AND DECORATION**

**BEING EXTRACTS FROM  
REVIEWS AND MISCELLANIES**

**BY**

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**ART AND DECORATION**

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**ART AND DECORATION**



## PHRASES AND PHILOSOPHIES FOR THE USE OF THE YOUNG

(December 1894)

**T**HE first duty in life is to be as artificial as possible. What the second duty is no one has as yet discovered.

Wickedness is a myth invented by good people to account for the curious attractiveness of others.

If the poor only had profiles there would be no difficulty in solving the problem of poverty.

Those who see any difference between soul and body have neither.

A really well-made buttonhole is the only link between Art and Nature.

Religions die when they are proved to be true. Science is the record of dead religions.

The well-bred contradict other people. The wise contradict themselves.

Nothing that actually occurs is of the smallest importance.

Dulness is the coming of age of seriousness.

In all unimportant matters, style, not sincerity, is the essential. In all important matters, style, not sincerity, is the essential.

If one tells the truth one is sure, sooner or later, to be found out.

Pleasure is the only thing one should live for. Nothing ages like happiness.

It is only by not paying one's bills that one can hope to live in the memory of the commercial classes.

No crime is vulgar, but all vulgarity is crime. Vulgarity is the conduct of others.

Only the shallow know themselves.

Time is waste of money.

One should always be a little improbable.

There is a fatality about all good resolutions.

They are invariably made too soon.

The only way to atone for being occasionally a little overdressed is by being always absolutely overeducated.

To be premature is to be perfect.

Any preoccupation with ideas of what is right or wrong in conduct shows an arrested intellectual development.

Ambition is the last refuge of the failure.

A truth ceases to be true when more than one person believes in it.

In examinations the foolish ask questions that the wise cannot answer.

Greek dress was in its essence inartistic.  
Nothing should reveal the body but the body.

One should either be a work of art, or wear  
a work of art.

It is only the superficial qualities that last.  
Man's deeper nature is soon found out.

Industry is the root of all ugliness.

The ages live in history through their ana-  
chronisms.

It is only the gods who taste of death. Apollo  
has passed away, but Hyacinth, whom men say  
he slew, lives on. Nero and Narcissus are always  
with us.

The old believe everything : the middle-aged  
suspect everything ; the young know everything.

The condition of perfection is idleness : the  
aim of perfection is youth.

Only the great masters of style ever succeeded  
in being obscure.

There is something tragic about the enormous  
number of young men there are in England at  
the present moment who start life with perfect  
profiles, and end by adopting some useful pro-  
fession.

To love oneself is the beginning of a life-long  
romance.

## HOUSE DECORATION<sup>1</sup>

IN my last lecture I gave you something of the history of Art in England. I sought to trace the influence of the French Revolution upon its development. I said something of the song of Keats and the school of the pre-Raphaelites. But I do not want to shelter the movement, which I have called the English Renaissance, under any palladium however noble, or any name however revered. The roots of it have, indeed, to be sought for in things that have long passed away, and not, as some suppose, in the fancy of a few young men—although I am not altogether sure that there is anything much better than the fancy of a few young men.

When I appeared before you on a previous occasion, I had seen nothing of American art save the Doric columns and Corinthian chimney-

<sup>1</sup> A lecture delivered in America during Wilde's tour in 1882. It was announced as a lecture on 'The Practical Application of the Principles of the *Aesthetic Theory* to Exterior and Interior House Decoration, With Observations upon Dress and Personal Ornaments.' The earliest date on which it is known to have been given is May 11, 1882.

pots visible on your Broadway and Fifth Avenue. Since then, I have been through your country to some fifty or sixty different cities, I think. I find that what your people need is not so much high imaginative art but that which hallows the vessels of everyday use. I suppose that the poet will sing and the artist will paint regardless whether the world praises or blames. He has his own world and is independent of his fellow-men. But the handicraftsman is dependent on your pleasure and opinion. He needs your encouragement and he must have beautiful surroundings. Your people love art but do not sufficiently honour the handicraftsman. Of course, those millionaires who can pillage Europe for their pleasure need have no care to encourage such; but I speak for those whose desire for beautiful things is larger than their means. I find that one great trouble all over is that your workmen are not given to noble designs. You cannot be indifferent to this, because Art is not something which you can take or leave. It is a necessity of human life.

And what is the meaning of this beautiful decoration which we call art? In the first place, it means value to the workman and it means the pleasure which he must necessarily take in making a beautiful thing. The mark of all good art is not that the thing done is done exactly or

finely, for machinery may do as much, but that it is worked out with the head and the workman's heart. I cannot impress the point too frequently that beautiful and rational designs are necessary in all work. I did not imagine, until I went into some of your simpler cities, that there was so much bad work done. I found, where I went, bad wall-papers horribly designed, and coloured carpets, and that old offender the horse-hair sofa, whose stolid look of indifference is always so depressing. I found meaningless chandeliers and machine-made furniture, generally of rosewood, which creaked dismally under the weight of the ubiquitous interviewer. I came across the small iron stove which they always persist in decorating with machine-made ornaments, and which is as great a bore as a wet day or any other particularly dreadful institution. When unusual extravagance was indulged in, it was garnished with two funeral urns.

It must always be remembered that what is well and carefully made by an honest workman, after a rational design, increases in beauty and value as the years go on. The old furniture brought over by the Pilgrims, two hundred years ago, which I saw in New England, is just as good and as beautiful to-day as it was when it first came here. Now, what you must do is to bring artists and handicraftsmen together.

Handicraftsmen cannot live, certainly cannot thrive, without such companionship. Separate these two and you rob art of all spiritual motive.

Having done this, you must place your workman in the midst of beautiful surroundings. The artist is not dependent on the visible and the tangible. He has his visions and his dreams to feed on. But the workman must see lovely forms as he goes to his work in the morning and returns at eventide. And, in connection with this, I want to assure you that noble and beautiful designs are never the result of idle fancy or purposeless day-dreaming. They come only as the accumulation of habits of long and delightful observation. And yet such things may not be taught. Right ideas concerning them can certainly be obtained only by those who have been accustomed to rooms that are beautiful and colours that are satisfying.

Perhaps one of the most difficult things for us to do is to choose a notable and joyous dress for men. There would be more joy in life if we were to accustom ourselves to use all the beautiful colours we can in fashioning our own clothes. The dress of the future, I think, will use drapery to a great extent and will abound with joyous colour. At present we have lost all nobility of dress and, in doing so, have almost annihilated the modern sculptor. And, in looking

around at the figures which adorn our parks, one could almost wish that we had completely killed the noble art. To see the frockcoat of the drawing-room done in bronze, or the double waistcoat perpetuated in marble, adds a new horror to death. But indeed, in looking through the history of costume, seeking an answer to the questions we have propounded, there is little that is either beautiful or appropriate. One of the earliest forms is the Greek drapery which is so exquisite for young girls. And then, I think we may be pardoned a little enthusiasm over the dress of the time of Charles I., so beautiful indeed, that in spite of its invention being with the Cavaliers it was copied by the Puritans. And the dress for the children of that time must not be passed over. It was a very golden age of the little ones. I do not think that they have ever looked so lovely as they do in the pictures of that time. The dress of the last century in England is also peculiarly gracious and graceful. There is nothing bizarre or strange about it, but it is full of harmony and beauty. In these days, when we have suffered so dreadfully from the incursions of the modern milliner, we hear ladies boast that they do not wear a dress more than once. In the old days, when the dresses were decorated with beautiful designs and worked with exquisite embroidery, ladies rather took a

pride in bringing out the garment and wearing it many times and handing it down to their daughters—a process that would, I think, be quite appreciated by a modern husband when called upon to settle his wife's bills.

And how shall men dress? Men say that they do not particularly care how they dress, and that it is little matter. I am bound to reply that I do not think that you do. In all my journeys through the country, the only well-dressed men that I saw—and in saying this I earnestly deprecate the polished indignation of your Fifth Avenue dandies—were the Western miners. Their wide-brimmed hats, which shaded their faces from the sun and protected them from the rain, and the cloak, which is by far the most beautiful piece of drapery ever invented, may well be dwelt on with admiration. Their high boots, too, were sensible and practical. They wore only what was comfortable, and therefore beautiful. As I looked at them I could not help thinking with regret of the time when these picturesque miners would have made their fortunes and would go East to assume again all the abominations of modern fashionable attire. Indeed, so concerned was I that I made some of them promise that when they again appeared in the more crowded scenes of Eastern civilisation they would still continue to wear their

lovely costume. But I do not believe they will.

Now, what America wants to-day is a school of rational art. Bad art is a great deal worse than no art at all. You must show your workmen specimens of good work so that they come to know what is simple and true and beautiful. To that end I would have you have a museum attached to these schools—not one of those dreadful modern institutions where there is a stuffed and very dusty giraffe, and a case or two of fossils, but a place where there are gathered examples of art decoration from various periods and countries. Such a place is the South Kensington Museum in London whereon we build greater hopes for the future than on any other one thing. There I go every Saturday night, when the museum is open later than usual, to see the handicraftsman, the wood-worker, the glass-blower and the worker in metals. And it is here that the man of refinement and culture comes face to face with the workman who ministers to his joy. He comes to know more of the nobility of the workman, and the workman, feeling the appreciation, comes to know more of the nobility of his work.

You have too many white walls. More colour is wanted. You should have such men as

Whistler among you to teach you the beauty and joy of colour. Take Mr. Whistler's 'Symphony in White,' which you no doubt have imagined to be something quite bizarre. It is nothing of the sort. Think of a cool grey sky flecked here and there with white clouds, a grey ocean and three wonderfully beautiful figures robed in white, leaning over the water and dropping white flowers from their fingers. Here is no extensive intellectual scheme to trouble you, and no metaphysics of which we have had quite enough in art. But if the simple and unaided colour strike the right keynote, the whole conception is made clear. I regard Mr. Whistler's famous Peacock Room as the finest thing in colour and art decoration which the world has known since Correggio painted that wonderful room in Italy where the little children are dancing on the walls. Mr. Whistler finished another room just before I came away—a breakfast room in blue and yellow. The ceiling was a light blue, the cabinet-work and the furniture were of a yellow wood, the curtains at the windows were white and worked in yellow, and when the table was set for breakfast with dainty blue china nothing can be conceived at once so simple and so joyous.

The fault which I have so observed in most of your rooms is that there is apparent no definite

scheme of colour. Everything is not attuned to a key-note as it should be. The apartments are crowded with pretty things which have no relation to one another. Again, your artists must decorate what is more simply useful. In your art schools I found no attempt to decorate such things as the vessels for water. I know of nothing uglier than the ordinary jug or pitcher. A museum could be filled with the different kinds of water vessels which are used in hot countries. Yet we continue to submit to the depressing jug with the handle all on one side. I do not see the wisdom of decorating dinner-plates with sunsets and soup-plates with moon-light scenes. I do not think it adds anything to the pleasure of the canvas-back duck to take it out of such glories. Besides, we do not want a soup-plate whose bottom seems to vanish in the distance. One feels neither safe nor comfortable under such conditions. In fact, I did not find in the art schools of the country that the difference was explained between decorative and imaginative art.

The conditions of art should be simple. A great deal more depends upon the heart than upon the head. Appreciation of art is not secured by any elaborate scheme of learning. Art requires a good healthy atmosphere. The motives for art are still around about us as they

were round about the ancients. And the subjects are also easily found by the earnest sculptor and the painter. Nothing is more picturesque and graceful than a man at work. The artist who goes on the children's playground, watches them at their sport and sees the boy stop to tie his shoe, will find the same themes that engaged the attention of the ancient Greeks, and such observation and the illustrations which follow will do much to correct that foolish impression that mental and physical beauty are always divorced.

To you, more than perhaps to any other country, has Nature been generous in furnishing material for art workers to work in. You have marble quarries where the stone is more beautiful in colour than any the Greeks ever had for their beautiful work, and yet day after day I am confronted with the great building of some stupid man who has used the beautiful material as if it were not precious almost beyond speech. Marble should not be used save by noble workmen. There is nothing which gave me a greater sense of barrenness in travelling through the country than the entire absence of wood carving on your houses. Wood carving is the simplest of the decorative arts. In Switzerland the little bare-footed boy beautifies the porch of his father's house with examples of skill in this direction.

Why should not American boys do a great deal more and better than Swiss boys?

There is nothing to my mind more coarse in conception and more vulgar in execution than modern jewellery. This is something that can easily be corrected. Something better should be made out of the beautiful gold which is stored up in your mountain hollows and strewn along your river beds. When I was at Leadville and reflected that all the shining silver that I saw coming from the mines would be made into ugly dollars, it made me sad. It should be made into something more permanent. The golden gates at Florence are as beautiful to-day as when Michael Angelo saw them.

We should see more of the workman than we do. We should not be content to have the salesman stand between us—the salesman who knows nothing of what he is selling save that he is charging a great deal too much for it. And watching the workman will teach that most important lesson—the nobility of all rational workmanship.

I said in my last lecture that art would create a new brotherhood among men by furnishing a universal language. I said that under its beneficent influences war might pass away. Thinking this, what place can I ascribe to art in our education? If children grow up among all fair

and lovely things, they will grow to love beauty and detest ugliness before they know the reason why. If you go into a house where everything is coarse, you find things chipped and broken and unsightly. Nobody exercises any care. If everything is dainty and delicate, gentleness and refinement of manner are unconsciously acquired. When I was in San Francisco I used to visit the Chinese Quarter frequently. There I used to watch a great hulking Chinese workman at his task of digging, and used to see him every day drink his tea from a little cup as delicate in texture as the petal of a flower, whereas in all the grand hotels of the land, where thousands of dollars have been lavished on great gilt mirrors and gaudy columns, I have been given my coffee or my chocolate in cups an inch and a quarter thick. I think I have deserved something nicer.

The art systems of the past have been devised by philosophers who looked upon human beings as obstructions. They have tried to educate boys' minds before they had any. How much better it would be in these early years to teach children to use their hands in the rational service of mankind. I would have a workshop attached to every school, and one hour a day given up to the teaching of simple decorative arts. It would be a golden hour to the children. And you would soon raise up a race of handi-

craftsmen who would transform the face of your country. I have seen only one such school in the United States, and this was in Philadelphia and was founded by my friend Mr. Leyland. I stopped there yesterday and have brought some of the work here this afternoon to show you. Here are two discs of beaten brass: the designs on them are beautiful, the workmanship is simple, and the entire result is satisfactory. The work was done by a little boy twelve years old. This is a wooden bowl decorated by a little girl of thirteen. The design is lovely and the colouring delicate and pretty. Here you see a piece of beautiful wood carving accomplished by a boy of nine. In such work as this, children learn sincerity in art. They learn to abhor the liar in art—the man who paints wood to look like iron, or iron to look like stone. It is a practical school of morals. No better way is there to learn to love Nature than to understand Art. It dignifies every flower of the field. And, the boy who sees the thing of beauty which a bird on the wing becomes when transferred to wood or canvas will probably not throw the customary stone. What we want is something spiritual added to life. Nothing is so ignoble that Art cannot sanctify it.

## ART AND THE HANDICRAFTSMAN<sup>1</sup>

PEOPLE often talk as if there was an opposition between what is beautiful and what is useful. There is no opposition to beauty except ugliness: all things are either beautiful or ugly, and utility will be always on the side of the beautiful thing, because beautiful decoration is always on the side of the beautiful thing, because beautiful decoration is always an expression of the use you put a thing to and the value placed on it. No workman will beautifully decorate bad work, nor can you possibly get good handcraftsmen or workmen without having beautiful designs. You should be quite sure of that. If you have poor and worthless designs in any craft or trade you will get poor and worthless workmen only, but the minute you have noble and beautiful designs, then you get men of power and intellect and feeling to work for you. By having

<sup>1</sup> The fragments of which this lecture is composed are taken entirely from the original manuscripts which have but recently been discovered. It is not certain that they all belong to the same lecture, nor that all were written at the same period. Some portions were written in Philadelphia in 1882.

good designs you have workmen who work not merely with their hands but with their hearts and heads too; otherwise you will get merely the fool or the loafer to work for you.

That the beauty of life is a thing of no moment, I suppose few people would venture to assert. And yet most civilized people act as if it were of none, and in so doing are wronging both themselves and those that are to come after them. For that beauty which is meant by art is no mere accident of human life which people can take or leave, but a positive necessity of life if we are to live as nature meant us to, that is to say unless we are content to be less than men.

Do not think that the commercial spirit which is the basis of your life and cities here is opposed to art. Who built the beautiful cities of the world but commercial men and commercial men only? Genoa built by its traders, Florence by its bankers, and Venice, most lovely of all, by its noble and honest merchants.

I do not wish you, remember, 'to build a new Pisa,' nor to bring 'the life or the decorations of the thirteenth century back again.' 'The circumstances with which you must surround your workmen are those' of modern American life, 'because the designs you have now to ask for from your workmen are such as will make

modern' American 'life beautiful.' The art we want is the art based on all the inventions of modern civilization, and to suit all the needs of nineteenth century life.

Do you think, for instance, that we object to machinery? I tell you we reverence it; we reverence it when it does its proper work, when it relieves man from ignoble and soulless labour, not when it seeks to do that which is valuable only when wrought by the hands and hearts of men. Let us have no machine-made ornament at all; it is all bad and worthless and ugly. And let us not mistake the means of civilization for the end of civilization; steam-engine, telephone and the like, are all wonderful, but remember that their value depends entirely on the noble uses we make of them, on the noble spirit in which we employ them, not on the things themselves.

It is, no doubt, a great advantage to talk to a man at the Antipodes through a telephone; its advantage depends entirely on the value of what the two men have to say to one another. If one merely shrieks slander through a tube and the other whispers folly into a wire, do not think that anybody is very much benefited by the invention.

The train that whirls an ordinary Englishman through Italy at the rate of forty miles an hour

and finally sends him home without any memory of that lovely country but that he was cheated by a courier at Rome, or that he got a bad dinner at Verona, does not do him or civilization much good. But that swift legion of fiery-footed engines that bore to the burning ruins of Chicago the loving help and generous treasure of the world was as noble and as beautiful as any golden troop of angels that ever fed the hungry and clothed the naked in the antique times. As beautiful, yes; all machinery may be beautiful when it is undecorated even. Do not seek to decorate it. We cannot but think all good machinery is graceful, also, the line of strength and the line of beauty being one.

Give then, as I said, to your workmen of to-day the bright and noble surroundings that you can yourself create. Stately and simple architecture for your cities, bright and simple dress for your men and women; those are the conditions of a real artistic movement. For the artist is not concerned primarily with any theory of life but with life itself, with the joy and loveliness that should come daily on eye and ear for a beautiful external world.

But the simplicity must not be barrenness nor the bright colour gaudy. For all beautiful colours are graduated colours, the colours that seem about to pass into one another's realm—

colour without tone being like music without harmony, mere discord. Barren architecture, the vulgar and glaring advertisements that desecrate not merely your cities but every rock and river that I have seen yet in America—all this is not enough. A school of design we must have too in each city. It should be a stately and noble building, full of the best examples of the best art of the world. Furthermore, do not put your designers in a barren whitewashed room and bid them work in that depressing and colourless atmosphere as I have seen many of the American schools of design, but give them beautiful surroundings. Because you want to produce a permanent canon and standard of taste in your workman, he must have always by him and before him specimens of the best decorative art of the world, so that you can say to him: ‘This is good work. Greek or Italian or Japanese wrought it so many years ago, but it is eternally young because eternally beautiful.’ Work in this spirit and you will be sure to be right. Do not copy it, but work with the same love, the same reverence, the same freedom of imagination. You must teach him colour and design, how all beautiful colours are graduated colours and glaring colours the essence of vulgarity. Show him the quality of any beautiful work of nature like the rose, or any beautiful work of

art like an Eastern carpet—being merely the exquisite graduation of colour, one tone answering another like the answering chords of a symphony. Teach him how the true designer is not he who makes the design and then colours it, but he who designs in colour, creates in colour, thinks in colour too. Show him how the most gorgeous stained glass windows of Europe are filled with white glass, and the most gorgeous Eastern tapestry with toned colours—the primary colours in both places being set in the white glass, and the tone colours like brilliant jewels set in dusky gold. And then as regards design, show him how the real designer will take first any given limited space, little disk of silver, it may be, like a Greek coin, or wide expanse of fretted ceiling or lordly wall as Tintoret chose at Venice (it does not matter which), and to this limited space—the first condition of decoration being the limitation of the size of the material used—he will give the effect of its being filled with beautiful decoration, filled with it as a golden cup will be filled with wine, so complete that you should not be able to take away anything from it or add anything to it. For from a good piece of design you can take away nothing, nor can you add anything to it, each little bit of design being as absolutely necessary and as

vitally important to the whole effect as a note or chord of music is for a sonata of Beethoven.

But I said the effect of its being so filled, because this, again, is of the essence of good design. With a simple spray of leaves and a bird in flight a Japanese artist will give you the impression that he has completely covered with lovely design the reed fan or lacquer cabinet at which he is working, merely because he knows the exact spot in which to place them. All good design depends on the texture of the utensil used and the use you wish to put it to. One of the first things I saw in an American school of design was a young lady painting a romantic moonlight landscape on a large round dish, and another young lady covering a set of dinner plates with a series of sunsets of the most remarkable colours. Let your ladies paint moonlight landscapes and sunsets, but do not let them paint them on dinner plates or dishes. Let them take canvas or paper for such work, but not clay or china. They are merely painting the wrong subjects on the wrong material, that is all. They have not been taught that every material and texture has certain qualities of its own. The design suitable for one is quite wrong for the other, just as the design which you should work on a flat table-cover ought to be quite different from the design you would work

on a curtain, for the one will always be straight, the other broken into folds ; and the use too one puts the object to should guide one in the choice of design. One does not want to eat one's terrapins off a romantic moonlight nor one's clams off a harrowing sunset. Glory of sun and moon, let them be wrought for us by our landscape artist and be on the walls of the rooms we sit in to remind us of the undying beauty of the sunsets that fade and die, but do not let us eat our soup off them and send them down to the kitchen twice a day to be washed and scrubbed by the handmaid.

All these things are simple enough, yet nearly always forgotten. Your school of design here will teach your girls and your boys, your handcraftsmen of the future (for all your schools of art should be local schools, the schools of particular cities). We talk of the Italian school of painting, but there is no Italian school ; there were the schools of each city. Every town in Italy, from Venice itself, queen of the sea, to the little hill fortress of Perugia, each had its own school of art, each different and all beautiful.

So do not mind what art Philadelphia or New York is having, but make by the hands of your own citizens beautiful art for the joy of your own citizens, for you have here the primary elements of a great artistic movement.

For, believe me, the conditions of art are much simpler than people imagine. For the noblest art one requires a clear healthy atmosphere, not polluted as the air of our English cities is by the smoke and grime and horridness which comes from open furnace and from factory chimney. You must have strong, sane, healthy physique among your men and women. Sickly or idle or melancholy people do not do much in art. And lastly, you require a sense of individualism, about each man and woman, for this is the essence of art—a desire on the part of man to express himself in the noblest way possible. And this is the reason that the grandest art of the world always came from a republic, Athens, Venice, and Florence—there were no kings there and so their art was as noble and simple as sincere. But if you want to know what kind of art the folly of kings will impose on a country look at the decorative art of France under the *grand monarch*, under Louis the Fourteenth; the gaudy gilt furniture writhing under a sense of its own horror and ugliness, with a nymph smirking at every angle and a dragon mouthing on every claw. Unreal and monstrous art this, and fit only for such periwigged pomposities as the nobility of France at that time, but not at all fit for you or me. We do not want the rich to possess more

beautiful things but the poor to create more beautiful things; for every man is poor who cannot create. Nor shall the art which you and I need be merely a purple robe woven by a slave and thrown over the whitened body of some leprous king to adorn or to conceal the sin of his luxury, but rather shall it be the noble and beautiful expression of a people's noble and beautiful life. Art shall be again the most glorious of all the chords through which the spirit of a great nation finds its noblest utterance.

All around you, I said, lie the conditions for a great artistic movement for every great art. Let us think of one of them; a sculptor for instance.

If a modern sculptor were to come and say, 'Very well, but where can one find subjects for sculpture out of men who wear frock-coats and chimney-pot hats?' I would tell him to go to the docks of a great city and watch the men loading or unloading the stately ships, working at wheel or windlass, hauling at rope or gangway. I have never watched a man do anything useful who has not been graceful at some moment of his labour; it is only the loafer and the idle saunterer who is as useless and uninteresting to the artist as he is to himself. I would ask the sculptor to go with me to any of your schools

or universities, to the running ground and gymnasium, to watch the young men start for a race, hurling quoit or club, kneeling to tie their shoes before leaping, stepping from the boat or bending to the oar, and to carve them ; and when he was weary of cities I would ask him to come to your fields and meadows to watch the reaper with his sickle and the cattle driver with lifted lasso. For if a man cannot find the noblest motives for his art in such simple daily things as a woman drawing water from the well or a man leaning with his scythe, he will not find them anywhere at all. Gods and goddesses the Greek carved because he loved them ; saint and king the Goth because he believed in them. But you, you do not care much for Greek gods and goddesses, and you are perfectly and entirely right ; and you do not think much of kings either, and you are quite right. But what you do love are your own men and women, your own flowers and fields, your own hills and mountains, and these are what your art should represent to you.

Ours has been the first movement which has brought the handicraftsman and the artist together, for remember that by separating the one from the other you do ruin to both ; you rob the one of all spiritual motive and all imaginative joy, you isolate the other from all real

technical perfection. The two greatest schools of art in the world, the sculptor at Athens and the school of painting at Venice, had their origin entirely in a long succession of simple and earnest handicraftsmen. It was the Greek potter who taught the sculptor that restraining influence of design which was the glory of the Parthenon ; it was the Italian decorator of chests and household goods who kept Venetian painting always true to its primary pictorial condition of noble colour. For we should remember that all the arts are fine arts and all the arts decorative arts. The greatest triumph of Italian painting was the decoration of a pope's chapel in Rome and the wall of a room in Venice. Michael Angelo wrought the one and Tintoret, the dyer's son, the other. And the little 'Dutch landscape,' which you put over your sideboard to-day, and between the windows to-morrow, is no less a glorious 'piece of work than the extents of field and forest with which Benozzo has made green and beautiful the once melancholy arcade of the Campo Santo at Pisa,' as Ruskin says.

Do not imitate the works of a nation, Greek or Japanese, Italian or English ; but their artistic spirit of design and their artistic attitude to-day, their own world, you should absorb but imitate never, copy never. Unless you can make as beautiful a design in painted china or em-

broidered screen or beaten brass out of your American turkey as the Japanese does out of his grey silver-winged stork, you will never do anything. Let the Greek carve his lions and and the Goth his dragons; buffalo and wild deer are the animals for you.

Golden rod and aster and rose and all the flowers that cover your valleys in the spring and your hills in the autumn: let them be the flowers for your art. Not merely has Nature given you the noblest motives for a new school of decoration, but to you above all other countries has she given the utensils to work in.

You have quarries of marble richer than Pantelicus, more varied than Paros, but do not build a great white square house of marble and think that it is beautiful, or that you are using marble nobly. If you build in marble you must either carve it into joyous decoration, like the lives of dancing children that adorn the marble castles of the Loire, or fill it with beautiful sculpture, frieze and pediment, as the Greeks did, or inlay it with other coloured marbles as they did in Venice. Otherwise you had better build in simple red brick as your Puritan fathers, with no pretence and with some beauty. Do not treat your marble as if it was ordinary stone and build a house of mere

blocks of it. For it is indeed a precious stone this marble of yours, and only workmen of nobility of invention and delicacy of hand should be allowed to touch it at all, carving it into noble statues or into beautiful decoration, or inlaying it with other coloured marbles: for the true colours of architecture are those of natural stone, and I would fain see them taken advantage of to the full. Every variety is here, from pale yellow to purple passing through orange, red and brown, entirely at your command; nearly every kind of green and grey also is attainable, and with these and with pure white what harmony might you not achieve. Of stained and variegated stone the quantity is unlimited, the kinds innumerable. Were brighter colours required, let glass, and gold protected by glass, be used in mosaic, a kind of work as durable as the solid stone and incapable of losing its lustre by time. And let the painter's work be reserved for the shadowed loggia and inner chamber.

This is the true and faithful way of building. Where this cannot be, the device of external colouring may indeed be employed without dishonour—but it must be with the warning reflection that a time will come when such aids will pass away and when the building will be judged in its lifelessness, dying the

death of the dolphin. Better the less bright, more enduring fabric. The transparent alabasters of San Miniato and the mosaics of Saint Mark's are more warmly filled and more brightly touched by every return of morning and evening rays, while the hues of the Gothic cathedrals have died like the iris out of the cloud, and the temples, whose azure and purple once flamed above the Grecian promontory, stand in their faded whiteness like snows which the sunset has left cold.

I do not know anything so perfectly commonplace in design as most modern jewellery. How easy for you to change that and to produce goldsmith's work that would be a joy to all of us. The gold is ready for you in unexhausted treasure, stored up in the mountain hollow or strewn on the river sand, and was not given to you merely for barren speculation. There should be some better record of it left in your history than the merchant's panic and the ruined home. We do not remember often enough how constantly the history of a great nation will live in and by its art. Only a few thin wreaths of beaten gold remain to tell us of the stately empire of Etruria; and, while from the streets of Florence the noble knight and haughty duke have long since

passed away, the gates which the simple goldsmith Gheberti made for their pleasure still guard their lovely house of baptism, worthy still of the praise of Michael Angelo who called them worthy to be the Gates of Paradise.

Have then your school of design, search out your workmen and, when you find one who has delicacy of hand and that wonder of invention necessary for goldsmiths' work, do not leave him to toil in obscurity and dishonour and have a great glaring shop and two great glaring shop-boys in it (not to take your orders: they never do that; but to force you to buy something you do not want at all). When you want a thing wrought in gold, goblet or shield for the feast, necklace or wreath for the women, tell him what you like most in decoration, flower or wreath, bird in flight or hound in the chase, image of the woman you love or the friend you honour. Watch him as he beats out the gold into those thin plates delicate as the petals of a yellow rose, or draws it into the long wires like tangled sunbeams at dawn. Whoever that workman be help him, cherish him, and you will have such lovely work from his hand as will be a joy to you for all time.

This is the spirit of our movement in England, and this is the spirit in which we would wish you to work, making eternal by your art all that is

noble in your men and women, stately in your lakes and mountains, beautiful in your own flowers and natural life. We want to see that you have nothing in your houses that has not been a joy to the man who made it, and is not a joy to those that use it. We want to see you create an art made by the hands of the people to please the hearts of the people too. Do you like this spirit or not? Do you think it simple and strong, noble in its aim, and beautiful in its result? I know you do.

Folly and slander have their own way for a little time, but for a little time only. You now know what we mean: you will be able to estimate what is said of us—its value and its motive.

There should be a law that no ordinary newspaper should be allowed to write about art. The harm they do by their foolish and random writing it would be impossible to overestimate—not to the artist but to the public, blinding them to all, but harming the artist not at all. Without them we would judge a man simply by his work; but at present the newspapers are trying hard to induce the public to judge a sculptor, for instance, never by his statues but by the way he treats his wife; a painter by the amount of his income and a poet by the colour of his necktie. I said there should be a law, but there is really no necessity for a new law: nothing could

be easier than to bring the ordinary critic under the head of the criminal classes. But let us leave such an inartistic subject and return to beautiful and comely things, remembering that the art which would represent the spirit of modern newspapers would be exactly the art which you and I want to avoid—grotesque art, malice mocking you from every gateway, slander sneering at you from every corner.

Perhaps you may be surprised at my talking of labour and the workman. You have heard of me, I fear, through the medium of your somewhat imaginative newspapers as, if not a ‘Japanese young man,’ at least a young man to whom the rush and clamour and reality of the modern world were distasteful, and whose greatest difficulty in life was the difficulty of living up to the level of his blue china—a paradox from which England has not yet recovered.

Well, let me tell you how it first came to me at all to create an artistic movement in England, a movement to show the rich what beautiful things they might enjoy and the poor what beautiful things they might create.

One summer afternoon in Oxford—‘that sweet city with her dreaming spires,’ lovely as Venice in its splendour, noble in its learning as Rome, down the long High Street that winds from tower to tower, past silent cloister and stately

gateway, till it reaches that long, grey seven-arched bridge which Saint Mary used to guard (used to, I say, because they are now pulling it down to build a tramway and a light cast-iron bridge in its place, desecrating the loveliest city in England)—well, we were coming down the street—a troop of young men, some of them like myself only nineteen, going to the river or tennis-court or cricket-field—when Ruskin going up to lecture in cap and gown met us. He seemed troubled and prayed us to go back with him to his lecture, which a few of us did, and there he spoke to us not on art this time but on life, saying that it seemed to him to be wrong that all the best physique and strength of the young men in England should be spent aimlessly on cricket-ground or river, without any result at all except that if one rowed well one got a pewter-pot, and if one made a good score, a cane-handled bat. He thought, he said, that we should be working at something that would do good to other people, at something by which we might show that in all labour there was something noble. Well, we were a good deal moved, and said we would do anything he wished. So he went out round Oxford and found two villages, Upper and Lower Hinksey, and between them there lay a great swamp, so that the villagers could not pass from one to the

other without many miles of a round. And when we came back in winter he asked us to help him to make a road across this morass for these village people to use. So out we went, day after day, and learned how to lay levels and to break stones, and to wheel barrows along a plank—a very difficult thing to do. And Ruskin worked with us in the mist and rain and mud of an Oxford winter, and our friends and our enemies came out and mocked us from the bank. We did not mind it much then, and we did not mind it afterwards at all, but worked away for two months at our road. And what became of the road? Well, like a bad lecture it ended abruptly—in the middle of the swamp. Ruskin going away to Venice, when we came back for the next term there was no leader, and the ‘diggers,’ as they called us, fell asunder. And I felt that if there was enough spirit amongst the young men to go out to such work as road-making for the sake of a noble ideal of life, I could from them create an artistic movement that might change, as it has changed, the face of England. So I sought them out—leader they would call me—but there was no leader: we were all searchers only and we were bound to each other by noble friendship and by noble art. There was none of us idle: poets most of us, so ambitious were we: painters some of us,

or workers in metal or modellers, determined that we would try and create for ourselves beautiful work : for the handicraftsman beautiful work, for those who love us poems and pictures, for those who love us not epigrams and paradoxes and scorn.

Well, we have done something in England and we will do something more. Now, I do not want you, believe me, to ask your brilliant young men, your beautiful young girls, to go out and make a road on a swamp for any village in America, but I think you might each of you have some art to practise.

We must have, as Emerson said, a mechanical craft for our culture, a basis for our higher accomplishments in the work of our hands—the uselessness of most people's hands seems to me one of the most unpractical things. 'No separation from labour can be without some loss of power or truth to the seer,' says Emerson again. The heroism which would make on us the impression of Epaminondas must be that of a domestic conqueror. The hero of the future is he who shall bravely and gracefully subdue this Gorgon of fashion and of convention.

When you have chosen your own part, abide by it, and do not weakly try and reconcile yourself with the world. The heroic cannot be the

common nor the common the heroic. Congratulate yourself if you have done something strange and extravagant and broken the monotony of a decorous age.

And lastly, let us remember that art is the one thing which Death cannot harm. The little house at Concord may be desolate, but the wisdom of New England's Plato is not silenced nor the brilliancy of that Attic genius dimmed : the lips of Longfellow are still musical for us though his dust be turning into the flowers which he loved : and as it is with the greater artists, poet and philosopher and songbird, so let it be with you.

## LECTURE TO ART STUDENTS<sup>1</sup>

IN the lecture which it is my privilege to deliver before you to-night I do not desire to give you any abstract definition of beauty at all. For, we who are working in art cannot accept any theory of beauty in exchange for beauty itself, and, so far from desiring to isolate it in a formula appealing to the intellect, we, on the contrary, seek to materialize it in a form that gives joy to the soul through the senses. We want to create it, not to define it. The definition should follow the work : the work should not adapt itself to the definition.

Nothing, indeed, is more dangerous to the young artist than any conception of ideal beauty; he is constantly led by it either into weak prettiness or lifeless abstraction: whereas to touch the ideal at all you must not strip it of vitality. You must find it in life and re-create it in art.

While, then, on the one hand I do not desire

<sup>1</sup> Delivered to the Art students of the Royal Academy at their Club in Golden Square, Westminster, on June 30, 1883. The text is taken from the original manuscript.

to give you any philosophy of beauty—for, what I want to-night is to investigate how we can create art, not how we can talk of it—on the other hand, I do not wish to deal with anything like a history of English art.

To begin with, such an expression as English art is a meaningless expression. One might just as well talk of English mathematics. Art is the science of beauty, and Mathematics the science of truth : there is no national school of either. Indeed, a national school is a provincial school, merely. Nor is there any such thing as a school of art even. There are merely artists, that is all.

And as regards histories of art, they are quite valueless to you unless you are seeking the ostentatious oblivion of an art professorship. It is of no use to you to know the date of Perugino or the birthplace of Salvator Rosa : all that you should learn about art is to know a good picture when you see it, and a bad picture when you see it. As regards the date of the artist, all good work looks perfectly modern ; a piece of Greek sculpture, a portrait of Velasquez—they are always modern, always of our time. And as regards the nationality of the artist, art is not national but universal. As regards archæology, then, avoid it altogether : archæology is merely the science of making excuses for bad art ; it is

the rock on which many a young artist founders and shipwrecks ; it is the abyss from which no artist, old or young, ever returns. Or, if he does return, he is covered with the dust of ages and the mildew of time, that he is quite unrecognizable as an artist, and has to conceal himself for the rest of his days under the cap of a professor, or as a mere illustrator of ancient history. How worthless archæology is in art you can estimate by the fact of its being so popular. Popularity is the crown of laurel which the world puts on bad art. Whatever is popular is wrong.

As I am not going to talk to you, then, about the philosophy of the beautiful, or the history of art, you will ask me what I am going to talk about. The subject of my lecture to-night is what makes an artist and what does the artist make ; what are the relations of the artist to his surroundings, what is the education the artist should get, and what is the quality of a good work of art.

Now, as regards the relations of the artist to his surroundings, by which I mean the age and country in which he is born. All good art, as I said before, has nothing to do with any particular century ; but this universality is the quality of the work of art ; the conditions that produce that quality are different. And what, I think,

you should do is to realize completely your age in order completely to abstract yourself from it ; remembering that if you are an artist at all, you will be not the mouthpiece of a century, but the master of eternity ; that all art rests on a principle, and that mere temporal considerations are no principle at all ; and that those who advise you to make your art representative of the nineteenth century are advising you to produce an art which your children, when you have them, will think old-fashioned. But you will tell me this is an inartistic age, and we are an inartistic people, and the artist suffers much in this nineteenth century of ours.

Of course he does. I, of all men, am not going to deny that. But remember that there never has been an artistic age, or an artistic people, since the beginning of the world. The artist has always been, and will always be, an exquisite exception. There is no golden age of art ; only artists who have produced what is more golden than gold.

*What, you will say to me, the Greeks? were not they an artistic people?*

Well, the Greeks certainly not, but, perhaps, you mean the Athenians, the citizens of one out of a thousand cities.

*Do you think that they were an artistic people? Take them even at the time of their highest*

artistic development, the latter part of the fifth century before Christ, when they had the greatest poets and the greatest artists of the antique world, when the Parthenon rose in loveliness at the bidding of a Phidias, and the philosopher spake of wisdom in the shadow of the painted portico, and tragedy swept in the perfection of pageant and pathos across the marble of the stage. Were they an artistic people then? Not a bit of it. What is an artistic people but a people who love their artists and understand their art? The Athenians could do neither.

How did they treat Phidias? To Phidias we owe the great era, not merely in Greek but in all art—I mean of the introduction of the use of the living model.

And what would you say if all the English bishops, backed by the English people, came down from Exeter Hall to the Royal Academy one day and took off Sir Frederick Leighton in a prison van to Newgate on the charge of having allowed you to make use of the living model in your designs for sacred pictures?

Would you not cry out about the barbarism and the Puritanism of such an idea? Would you not explain to them that the worst way to honour God is to dishonour man who is made in His image, and is the work of His hands; and, that if one wants to paint Christ one must take

the most Christlike person one can find, and if one wants to paint the Madonna, the purest girl one knows.

Would you not rush off and burn down Newgate, if necessary, and say that such a thing was without parallel in history?

Without parallel? Well, that is exactly what the Athenians did.

In the room of the Parthenon marbles, in the British Museum, you will see a marble shield on the wall. On it there are two figures, one of a man whose face is half hidden, the other of a man with the godlike lineaments of Pericles. For having done this, for having introduced into a bas-relief, taken from Greek sacred history, the image of the great statesman who was ruling Athens at the time, Phidias was flung into prison and there, in the common gaol of Athens, died, the supreme artist of the old world.

And do you think that this was an exceptional case? The sign of a Philistine age is the cry of immorality against art, and this cry was raised by the Athenian people against every great poet and thinker of their day—Æschylus, Euripides, Socrates. It was the same with Florence in the thirteenth century. Good handicrafts are due to guilds not to the people. The moment the guilds lost their power and the people rushed in, beauty and honesty of work died.

And so, never talk of an artistic people ; there never has been such a thing.

But, perhaps, you will tell me that the external beauty of the world has almost entirely passed away from us, that the artist dwells no longer in the midst of the lovely surroundings which, in ages past, were the natural inheritance of every one, and that art is very difficult in this unlovely town of ours, where, as you go to your work in the morning, or return from it at eventide, you have to pass through street after street of the most foolish and stupid architecture that the world has ever seen ; architecture, where every lovely Greek form is desecrated and defiled, and every lovely Gothic form defiled and desecrated, reducing three-fourths of the London houses to being, merely, like square boxes of the vilest proportions, as gaunt as they are grimy, and as poor as they are pretentious—the hall door always of the wrong colour, and the windows of the wrong size, and where, even when wearied of the houses, you turn to contemplate the street itself, you have nothing to look at but chimney-pot hats, men with sandwich boards, vermillion letter-boxes, and do that even at the risk of being run over by an emerald-green omnibus.

Is not art difficult, you will say to me, in such surroundings as these ? Of course it is difficult, but then art was never easy ; you yourself would

not wish it to be easy ; and, besides, nothing is worth doing except what the world says is impossible.

Still, you do not care to be answered merely by a paradox. What are the relations of the artist to the external world, and what is the result of the loss of beautiful surroundings to you, is one of the most important questions of modern art ; and there is no point on which Mr. Ruskin so insists as that the decadence of art has come from the decadence of beautiful things ; and that when the artist can not feed his eye on beauty, beauty goes from his work.

I remember in one of his lectures, after describing the sordid aspect of a great English city, he draws for us a picture of what were the artistic surroundings long ago.

Think, he says, in words of perfect and picturesque imagery, whose beauty I can but feebly echo, think of what was the scene which presented itself, in his afternoon walk, to a designer of the Gothic school of Pisa—Nino Pisano or any of his men<sup>1</sup>:

On each side of a bright river he saw rise a line of brighter palaces, arched and pillared, and inlaid with deep red porphyry, and with serpentine ; along the quays before their gates were riding troops of knights,

<sup>1</sup> *The Two Paths*, Lect. III. p. 123 (1859 ed.).

noble in face and form, dazzling in crest and shield ; horse and man one labyrinth of quaint colour and gleaming light—the purple, and silver, and scarlet fringes flowing over the strong limbs and clashing mail, like sea-waves over rocks at sunset. Opening on each side from the river were gardens, courts, and cloisters ; long successions of white pillars among wreaths of vine ; leaping of fountains through buds of pomegranate and orange : and still along the garden-paths, and under and through the crimson of the pomegranate shadows, moving slowly, groups of the fairest women that Italy ever saw—fairest, because purest and thoughtfullest ; trained in all high knowledge, as in all courteous art—in dance, in song, in sweet wit, in lofty learning, in loftier courage, in loftiest love—able alike to cheer, to enchant, or save, the souls of men. Above all this scenery of perfect human life, rose dome and bell-tower, burning with white alabaster and gold : beyond dome and bell-tower the slopes of mighty hills, hoary with olive ; far in the north, above a purple sea of peaks of solemn Apennine, the clear, sharp-cloven Carrara mountains sent up their steadfast flames of marble summit into amber sky ; the great sea itself, scorching with expanse of light, stretching from their feet to the Gorgonian isles ; and over all these, ever present, near or far—seen through the leaves of vine, or imaged with all its march of clouds in the Arno's stream, or set with its depth of blue close against the golden hair and burning cheek of lady and knight,—that untroubled and sacred sky, which was to all men, in those days of innocent faith, indeed the unquestioned abode of spirits, as the earth was of men ; and which opened straight through its gates of cloud and

veils of dew into the awfulness of the eternal world ; —a heaven in which every cloud that passed was literally the chariot of an angel, and every ray of its Evening and Morning streamed from the throne of God.

What think you of that for a school of design ?

And then look at the depressing, monotonous appearance of any modern city, the sombre dress of men and women, the meaningless and barren architecture, the colourless and dreadful surroundings. Without a beautiful national life, not sculpture merely, but all the arts will die.

Well, as regards the religious feeling of the close of the passage, I do not think I need speak about that. Religion springs from religious feeling, art from artistic feeling : you never get one from the other ; unless you have the right root you will not get the right flower ; and, if a man sees in a cloud the chariot of an angel, he will probably paint it very unlike a cloud.

But, as regards the general idea of the early part of that lovely bit of prose, is it really true that beautiful surroundings are necessary for the artist ? I think not ; I am sure not. Indeed, to me the most inartistic thing in this age of ours is not the indifference of the public to beautiful things, but the indifference of the artist to the things that are called ugly. For, to the real artist, nothing is beautiful or ugly in

itself at all. With the facts of the object he has nothing to do, but with its appearance only, and appearance is a matter of light and shade, of masses, of position, and of value.

Appearance is, in fact, a matter of effect merely, and it is with the effects of nature that you have to deal, not with the real condition of the object. What you, as painters, have to paint, is not things as they are but things as they seem to be, not things as they are but things as they are not.

No object is so ugly that, under certain conditions of light and shade, or proximity to other things, it will not look beautiful ; no object is so beautiful that, under certain conditions, it will not look ugly. I believe that in every twenty-four hours what is beautiful looks ugly, and what is ugly looks beautiful once.

And, the commonplace character of so much of our English painting seems to me due to the fact that so many of our young artists look merely at what we call 'ready-made beauty,' whereas you exist as artists not to copy beauty but to create it in your art, to wait and watch for it in nature.

What would you say of a dramatist who would take nobody but virtuous people as characters in his play ? Would you not say he was missing half of life ? Well, of the young artist who

paints nothing but beautiful things, I say, he misses one half of the world.

Do not wait for life to be picturesque, but try and see life under picturesque conditions. These conditions you can create for yourselves in your studio, for they are merely conditions of light. In nature you must wait for them, watch for them, choose them ; and, if you wait and watch, come they will.

In Gower Street at night you may see a letter-box that is picturesque ; on the Thames Embankment you may see picturesque policemen. Even Venice is not always beautiful, nor France.

To paint what you see is a good rule in art, but to see what is worth painting is better. See life under pictorial conditions. It is better to live in a city of changeable weather than in a city of lovely surroundings.

Now, having seen what makes the artist, and what the artist makes, who is the artist ? There is a man living amongst us who unites in himself all the qualities of the noblest art, whose work is a joy for all time, who is, himself, a master of all time. That man is Mr. Whistler.

But, you will say, modern dress, that is bad. If you cannot paint black cloth you could not have painted silken doublet. Ugly dress is better for art—facts of vision, not of the object.

What is a picture? Primarily, a picture is a beautifully covered surface, merely, with no more spiritual message or meaning for you than an exquisite fragment of Venetian glass or a blue tile from the wall of Damascus. It is, primarily, a purely decorative thing, a delight to look at.

All archæological pictures that make you say 'How curious!' all sentimental pictures that make you say 'How sad!' all historical pictures that make you say 'How interesting!' all pictures that do not immediately give you such artistic joy as to make you say 'How beautiful!' are bad pictures.

We never know what an artist is going to do. Of course not. The artist is not a specialist. All such divisions as animal painters, landscape painters, painters of Scotch cattle in an English mist, painters of English cattle in a Scotch mist, racehorse painters, bull-terrier painters, all are shallow. If a man is an artist he can paint everything.

The object of art is to stir the most divine and remote of the chords which make music in our soul; and colour, is, indeed, of itself a mystical presence on things, and tone a kind of sentinel.

Am I pleading, then, for mere technique? No. As long as there are any signs of technique at all, the picture is unfinished. What is finish? A picture is finished when all traces of work, and of the means employed to bring about the result, have disappeared.

In the case of handcraftsmen—the weaver, the potter, the smith—on their work are the traces of their hand. But it is not so with the painter; it is not so with the artist.

Art should have no sentiment about it but its beauty, no technique except what you cannot observe. One should be able to say of a picture not that it is ‘well painted,’ but that it is ‘not painted.’

What is the difference between absolutely decorative art and a painting? Decorative art emphasizes its material: imaginative art annihilates it. Tapestry shows its threads as part of its beauty: a picture annihilates its canvas; it shows nothing of it. Porcelain emphasizes its glaze: water-colours reject the paper.

A picture has no meaning but its beauty, no message but its joy. That is the first truth about art that you must never lose sight of. A picture is a purely decorative thing.

## MRS. LANGTRY AS HESTER GRAZEBROOK

(*New York World*, November 7, 1882)

IT is only in the best Greek gems, on the silver coins of Syracuse, or among the marble figures of the Parthenon frieze, that one can find the ideal representation of the marvellous beauty of that face which laughed through the leaves last night as Hester Grazebrook.

Pure Greek it is, with the grave low forehead, the exquisitely arched brow; the noble chiselling of the mouth, shaped as if it were the mouthpiece of an instrument of music; the supreme and splendid curve of the cheek; the augustly pillared throat which bears it all: it is Greek, because the lines which compose it are so definite and so strong, and yet so exquisitely harmonized that the effect is one of simple loveliness purely: Greek, because its essence and its quality, as is the quality of music and of architecture, is that of beauty based on absolutely mathematical laws.

But while art remains dumb and immobile in its passionless serenity, with the beauty of this face it is different: the grey eyes lighten into blue or deepen into violet as fancy succeeds fancy; the lips become flower-like in laughter or, tremulous as a bird's wing, mould themselves at last into the strong and bitter moulds of pain or scorn. And then motion comes, and the statue wakes into life. But the life is not the ordinary life of common days; it is life with a new value given to it, the value of art: and the charm to me of Hester Grazebrook's acting in the first scene of the play<sup>1</sup> last night was that mingling of classic grace with absolute reality which is the secret of all beautiful art, of the plastic work of the Greeks and of the pictures of Jean François Millet equally.

I do not think that the sovereignty and empire of women's beauty has at all passed away, though we may no longer go to war for them as the Greeks did for the daughter of Leda. The greatest empire still remains for them—the empire of art. And, indeed, this wonderful face, seen last night for the first time in America, has filled and permeated with the pervading image of its type the whole of our modern art in England. Last century it

<sup>1</sup> *An Unequal Match*, by Tom Taylor, at Wallack's Theatre, New York, November 6, 1882.

was the romantic type which dominated in art, the type loved by Reynolds and Gainsborough, of wonderful contrasts of colour, of exquisite and varying charm of expression, but without that definite plastic feeling which divides classic from romantic work. This type degenerated into mere facile prettiness in the hands of lesser masters, and, in protest against it, was created by the hands of the Pre-Raphaelites a new type, with its rare combination of Greek form with Florentine mysticism. But this mysticism becomes over-strained and a burden, rather than an aid to expression, and a desire for the pure Hellenic joy and serenity came in its place; and in all our modern work, in the paintings of such men as Albert Moore and Leighton and Whistler, we can trace the influence of this single face giving fresh life and inspiration in the form of a new artistic ideal.

## SLAVES OF FASHION

MISS LEFFLER-ARNIM'S statement, in a lecture delivered recently at St. Saviour's Hospital, that 'she had heard of instances where ladies were so determined not to exceed the fashionable measurement that they had actually held on to a cross-bar while their maids fastened the fifteen-inch corset,' has excited a good deal of incredulity, but there is nothing really improbable in it. From the sixteenth century to our own day there is hardly any form of torture that has not been inflicted on girls, and endured by women, in obedience to the dictates of an unreasonable and monstrous Fashion. 'In order to obtain a real Spanish figure,' says Montaigne, 'what a Gehenna of suffering will not women endure, drawn in and compressed by great *coches* entering the flesh; nay, sometimes they even die thereof!' 'A few days after my arrival at school,' Mrs. Somerville tells us in her memoirs, 'although perfectly straight and well made, I was enclosed in stiff stays, with a steel busk in front; while above

my frock, bands drew my shoulders back till the shoulder-blades met. Then a steel rod with a semi-circle, which went under my chin, was clasped to the steel busk in my stays. In this constrained state I and most of the younger girls had to prepare our lessons'; and in the life of Miss Edgeworth we read that, being sent to a certain fashionable establishment, 'she underwent all the usual tortures of back-boards, iron collars and dumbbells, and also (because she was a very tiny person) the unusual one of being hung by the neck to draw out the muscles and increase the growth,' a signal failure in her case. Indeed, instances of absolute mutilation and misery are so common in the past that it is unnecessary to multiply them; but it is really sad to think that in our own day a civilized woman can hang on to a cross-bar while her maid laces her waist into a fifteen-inch circle. To begin with, the waist is not a circle at all, but an oval; nor can there be any greater error than to imagine that an unnaturally small waist gives an air of grace, or even of slightness, to the whole figure. Its effect, as a rule, is simply to exaggerate the width of the shoulders and the hips; and those whose figures possess that stateliness which is called stoutness by the vulgar, convert what is a quality into a defect by yielding to the silly edicts of Fashion on the

subject of tight-lacing. The fashionable English waist, also, is not merely far too small, and consequently quite out of proportion to the rest of the figure, but it is worn far too low down. I use the expression ‘worn’ advisedly, for a waist nowadays seems to be regarded as an article of apparel to be put on when and where one likes. A long waist always implies shortness of the lower limbs, and, from the artistic point of view, has the effect of diminishing the height; and I am glad to see that many of the most charming women in Paris are returning to the idea of the Directoire style of dress. This style is not by any means perfect, but at least it has the merit of indicating the proper position of the waist. I feel quite sure that all English women of culture and position will set their faces against such stupid and dangerous practices as are related by Miss Leffler-Arnim. Fashion’s motto is: *Il faut souffrir pour être belle*; but the motto of art and of common-sense is: *Il faut être bête pour souffrir.*

Talking of Fashion, a critic in the *Pall Mall Gazette* expresses his surprise that I should have allowed an illustration of a hat, covered with ‘the bodies of dead birds,’ to appear in the first number of the *Woman’s World*; and as I have received many letters on the subject, it is only right that I should state my exact position in

the matter. Fashion is such an essential part of the *mundus muliebris* of our day, that it seems to me absolutely necessary that its growth, development, and phases should be duly chronicled; and the historical and practical value of such a record depends entirely upon its perfect fidelity to fact. Besides, it is quite easy for the children of light to adapt almost any fashionable form of dress to the requirements of utility and the demands of good taste. The Sarah Bernhardt tea-gown, for instance, figured in the present issue, has many good points about it, and the gigantic dress-improver does not appear to me to be really essential to the mode; and though the Postillion costume of the fancy dress ball is absolutely detestable in its silliness and vulgarity, the so-called Late Georgian costume in the same plate is rather pleasing. I must, however, protest against the idea that to chronicle the development of Fashion implies any approval of the particular forms that Fashion may adopt.

## WOMAN'S DRESS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, October 14, 1884)

MR. OSCAR WILDE, who asks us to permit him 'that most charming of all pleasures, the pleasure of answering one's critics,' sends us the following remarks:—

THE 'Girl Graduate' must of course have precedence, not merely for her sex but for her sanity: her letter is extremely sensible. She makes two points: that high heels are a necessity for any lady who wishes to keep her dress clean from the Stygian mud of our streets, and that without a tight corset 'the ordinary number of petticoats and etceteras' cannot be properly or conveniently held up. Now, it is quite true that as long as the lower garments are suspended from the hips a corset is an absolute necessity; the mistake lies in not suspending all apparel from the shoulders. In the latter case a corset becomes useless, the body is left free and unconfined for respiration and motion, there is more health, and consequently more beauty. Indeed all the most ungainly and

uncomfortable articles of dress that fashion has ever in her folly prescribed, not the tight corset merely, but the farthingale, the vertugadin, the hoop, the crinoline, and that modern monstrosity the so-called 'dress improver' also, all of them have owed their origin to the same error, the error of not seeing that it is from the shoulders, and from the shoulders only, that all garments should be hung.

And as regards high heels, I quite admit that some additional height to the shoe or boot is necessary if long gowns are to be worn in the street; but what I object to is that the height should be given to the heel only, and not to the sole of the foot also. The modern high-heeled boot is, in fact, merely the clog of the time of Henry VI., with the front prop left out, and its inevitable effect is to throw the body forward, to shorten the steps, and consequently to produce that want of grace which always follows want of freedom.

Why should clogs be despised? Much art has been expended on clogs. They have been made of lovely woods, and delicately inlaid with ivory, and with mother-of-pearl. A clog might be a dream of beauty, and, if not too high or too heavy, most comfortable also. But if there be any who do not like clogs, let them try some adaptation of the trouser of the Turkish lady,

which is loose round the limb and tight at the ankle.

The ‘Girl Graduate,’ with a pathos to which I am not insensible, entreats me not to apotheo-size ‘that awful, befringed, beflounced, and bekilted divided skirt.’ Well, I will acknowledge that the fringes, the flounces, and the kilting do certainly defeat the whole object of the dress, which is that of ease and liberty; but I regard these things as mere wicked superfluities, tragic proofs that the divided skirt is ashamed of its own division. The principle of the dress is good, and, though it is not by any means perfection, it is a step towards it.

Here I leave the ‘Girl Graduate,’ with much regret, for Mr. Wentworth Huyshe. Mr. Huyshe makes the old criticism that Greek dress is unsuited to our climate, and, to me the somewhat new assertion, that the men’s dress of a hundred years ago was preferable to that of the second part of the seventeenth century, which I consider to have been the exquisite period of English costume.

Now, as regards the first of these two statements, I will say, to begin with, that the warmth of apparel does not depend really on the number of garments worn, but on the material of which they are made. One of the chief faults of modern dress is that it is composed of far too many

articles of clothing, most of which are of the wrong substance; but over a substratum of pure wool, such as is supplied by Dr. Jaeger under the modern German system, some modification of Greek costume is perfectly applicable to our climate, our country and our century. This important fact has already been pointed out by Mr. E. W. Godwin in his excellent, though too brief handbook on Dress, contributed to the Health Exhibition. I call it an important fact because it makes almost any form of lovely costume perfectly practicable in our cold climate. Mr. Godwin, it is true, points out that the English ladies of the thirteenth century abandoned after some time the flowing garments of the early Renaissance in favour of a tighter mode, such as Northern Europe seems to demand. This I quite admit, and its significance; but what I contend, and what I am sure Mr. Godwin would agree with me in, is that the principles, the laws of Greek dress may be perfectly realized, even in a moderately tight gown with sleeves: I mean the principle of suspending all apparel from the shoulders, and of relying for beauty of effect not on the stiff ready-made ornaments of the modern milliner—the bows where there should be no bows, and the flounces where there should be no flounces—but on the exquisite play of light and line that

one gets from rich and rippling folds. I am not proposing any antiquarian revival of an ancient costume, but trying merely to point out the right laws of dress, laws which are dictated by art and not by archaeology, by science and not by fashion ; and just as the best work of art in our days is that which combines classic grace with absolute reality, so from a continuation of the Greek principles of beauty with the German principles of health will come, I feel certain, the costume of the future.

And now to the question of men's dress, or rather to Mr. Huyshe's claim of the superiority, in point of costume, of the last quarter of the eighteenth century over the second quarter of the seventeenth. The broad-brimmed hat of 1640 kept the rain of winter and the glare of summer from the face ; the same cannot be said of the hat of one hundred years ago, which, with its comparatively narrow brim and high crown, was the precursor of the modern 'chimney-pot' : a wide turned-down collar is a healthier thing than a strangling stock, and a short cloak much more comfortable than a sleeved overcoat, even though the latter may have had 'three capes' ; a cloak is easier to put on and off, lies lightly on the shoulder in summer, and wrapped round one in winter keeps one perfectly warm. A doublet, again, is simpler than a coat and waistcoat ;

instead of two garments one has one ; by not being open also it protects the chest better.

Short loose trousers are in every way to be preferred to the tight knee-breeches which often impede the proper circulation of the blood ; and finally, the soft leather boots which could be worn above or below the knee, are more supple, and give consequently more freedom, than the stiff Hessian which Mr. Huyshe so praises. I say nothing about the question of grace and picturesqueness, for I suppose that no one, not even Mr. Huyshe, would prefer a maccaroni to a cavalier, a Lawrence to a Vandyke, or the third George to the first Charles ; but for ease, warmth and comfort this seventeenth-century dress is infinitely superior to anything that came after it, and I do not think it is excelled by any preceding form of costume. I sincerely trust that we may soon see in England some national revival of it.

## MORE RADICAL IDEAS UPON DRESS REFORM

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, November 11, 1884)

I HAVE been much interested at reading the large amount of correspondence that has been called forth by my recent lecture on Dress. It shows me that the subject of dress reform is one that is occupying many wise and charming people, who have at heart the principles of health, freedom, and beauty in costume, and I hope that 'H. B. T.' and 'Materfamilias' will have all the real influence which their letters—excellent letters both of them—certainly deserve.

I turn first to Mr. Huyshe's second letter, and the drawing that accompanies it; but before entering into any examination of the theory contained in each, I think I should state at once that I have absolutely no idea whether this gentleman wears his hair long or short, or his cuffs back or forward, or indeed what he is like at all. I hope he consults his own comfort and

wishes in everything which has to do with his dress, and is allowed to enjoy that individualism in apparel which he so eloquently claims for himself, and so foolishly tries to deny to others ; but I really could not take Mr. Wentworth Huyshe's personal appearance as any intellectual basis for an investigation of the principles which should guide the costume of a nation. I am not denying the force, or even the popularity, of the 'Eave arf a brick' school of criticism, but I acknowledge it does not interest me. The gamin in the gutter may be a necessity, but the gamin in discussion is a nuisance. So I will proceed at once to the real point at issue, the value of the late eighteenth-century costume over that worn in the second quarter of the seventeenth : the relative merits, that is, of the principles contained in each. Now, as regards the eighteenth-century costume, Mr. Wentworth Huyshe acknowledges that he has had no practical experience of it at all ; in fact he makes a pathetic appeal to his friends to corroborate him in his assertion, which I do not question for a moment, that he has never been 'guilty of the eccentricity' of wearing himself the dress which he proposes for general adoption by others. There is something so naive and so amusing about this last passage in Mr. Huyshe's letter that I am really in doubt whether I am not

doing him a wrong in regarding him as having any serious, or sincere, views on the question of a possible reform in dress; still, as irrespective of any attitude of Mr. Huyshe's in the matter, the subject is in itself an interesting one, I think it is worth continuing, particularly as I have myself worn this late eighteenth-century dress many times, both in public and in private, and so may claim to have a very positive right to speak on its comfort and suitability. The particular form of the dress I wore was very similar to that given in Mr. Godwin's handbook, from a print of Northcote's, and had a certain elegance and grace about it which was very charming; still, I gave it up for these reasons:—After a further consideration of the laws of dress I saw that a doublet is a far simpler and easier garment than a coat and waistcoat, and, if buttoned from the shoulder, far warmer also, and that tails have no place in costume, except on some Darwinian theory of heredity; from absolute experience in the matter I found that the excessive tightness of knee-breeches is not really comfortable if one wears them constantly; and, in fact, I satisfied myself that the dress is not one founded on any real principles. The broad-brimmed hat and loose cloak, which, as my object was not, of course, historical accuracy but modern ease, I had always worn with the costume in ques-

tion, I have still retained, and find them most comfortable.

Well, although Mr. Huyshe has no real experience of the dress he proposes, he gives us a drawing of it, which he labels, somewhat prematurely, ‘An ideal dress.’ An ideal dress of course it is not; ‘passably picturesque,’ he says I may possibly think it; well, passably picturesque it may be, but not beautiful, certainly, simply because it is not founded on right principles, or, indeed, on any principles at all. Picturesqueness one may get in a variety of ways; ugly things that are strange, or unfamiliar to us, for instance, may be picturesque, such as a late sixteenth-century costume, or a Georgian house. Ruins, again, may be picturesque, but beautiful they never can be, because their lines are meaningless. Beauty, in fact, is to be got only from the perfection of principles; and in ‘the ideal dress’ of Mr. Huyshe there are no ideas or principles at all, much less the perfection of either. Let us examine it, and see its faults; they are obvious to any one who desires more than a ‘Fancy-dress ball’ basis for costume. To begin with, the hat and boots are all wrong. Whatever one wears on the extremities, such as the feet and head, should, for the sake of comfort, be made of a soft material, and for the sake of freedom should take its shape from the way

one chooses to wear it, and not from any stiff, stereotyped design of hat or boot maker. In a hat made on right principles one should be able to turn the brim up or down according as the day is dark or fair, dry or wet; but the hat brim of Mr. Huyshe's drawing is perfectly stiff, and does not give much protection to the face, or the possibility of any at all to the back of the head or the ears, in case of a cold east wind; whereas the bycocket, a hat made in accordance with the right laws, can be turned down behind and at the sides, and so give the same warmth as a hood. The crown, again, of Mr. Huyshe's hat is far too high; a high crown diminishes the stature of a small person, and in the case of any one who is tall is a great inconvenience when one is getting in and out of hansoms and railway carriages, or passing under a street awning: in no case is it of any value whatsoever, and being useless it is of course against the principles of dress.

As regards the boots, they are not quite so ugly or so uncomfortable as the hat; still they are evidently made of stiff leather, as otherwise they would fall down to the ankle, whereas the boot should be made of soft leather always, and if worn high at all must be either laced up the front or carried well over the knee: in the latter case one combines perfect freedom for walking

together with perfect protection against rain, neither of which advantages a short stiff boot will ever give one, and when one is resting in the house the long soft boot can be turned down as the boot of 1640 was. Then there is the overcoat: now, what are the right principles of an overcoat? To begin with, it should be capable of being easily put on or off, and worn over any kind of dress; consequently it should never have narrow sleeves, such as are shown in Mr. Huyshe's drawing. If an opening or slit for the arm is required it should be made quite wide, and may be protected by a flap, as in that excellent overall the modern Inverness cape; secondly, it should not be too tight, as otherwise all freedom of walking is impeded. If the young gentleman in the drawing buttons his overcoat he may succeed in being statuesque, though that I doubt very strongly, but he will never succeed in being swift; his *super-totus* is made for him on no principle whatsoever; a *super-totus*, or overall, should be capable of being worn long or short, quite loose or moderately tight, just as the wearer wishes; he should be able to have one arm free and one arm covered, or both arms free or both arms covered, just as he chooses for his convenience in riding, walking, or driving; an overall again should never be heavy, and should always be warm: lastly, it

should be capable of being easily carried if one wants to take it off; in fact, its principles are those of freedom and comfort, and a cloak realizes them all, just as much as an overcoat of the pattern suggested by Mr. Huyshe violates them.

The knee-breeches are of course far too tight; any one who has worn them for any length of time—any one, in fact, whose views on the subject are not purely theoretical—will agree with me there; like everything else in the dress, they are a great mistake. The substitution of the jacket for the coat and waistcoat of the period is a step in the right direction, which I am glad to see; it is, however, far too tight over the hips for any possible comfort. Whenever a jacket or doublet comes below the waist it should be slit at each side. In the seventeenth century the skirt of the jacket was sometimes laced on by points and tags, so that it could be removed at will, sometimes it was merely left open at the sides: in each case it exemplified what are always the true principles of dress, I mean freedom and adaptability to circumstances.

Finally, as regards drawings of this kind, I would point out that there is absolutely no limit at all to the amount of ‘passably picturesque’ costumes which can be either revived or invented for us; but that unless a costume is founded on

principles and exemplified laws, it never can be of any real value to us in the reform of dress. This particular drawing of Mr. Huyshe's, for instance, proves absolutely nothing, except that our grandfathers did not understand the proper laws of dress. There is not a single rule of right costume which is not violated in it, for it gives us stiffness, tightness and discomfort instead of comfort, freedom and ease.

Now here, on the other hand, is a dress which, being founded on principles, can serve us as an excellent guide and model; it has been drawn for me, most kindly, by Mr. Godwin from the Duke of Newcastle's delightful book on horsemanship, a book which is one of our best authorities on our best era of costume. I do not of course propose it necessarily for absolute imitation; that is not the way in which one should regard it; it is not, I mean, a revival of a dead costume, but a realization of living laws. I give it as an example of a particular application of principles which are universally right. This rationally dressed young man can turn his hat brim down if it rains, and his loose trousers and boots down if he is tired—that is, he can adapt his costume to circumstances; then he enjoys perfect freedom, the arms and legs are not made awkward or uncomfortable by the excessive tightness of narrow sleeves and knee-breeches,

and the hips are left quite untrammelled, always an important point ; and as regards comfort, his jacket is not too loose for warmth, nor too close for respiration ; his neck is well protected without being strangled, and even his ostrich feathers, if any Philistine should object to them, are not merely dandyism, but fan him very pleasantly, I am sure, in summer, and when the weather is bad they are no doubt left at home, and his cloak taken out. *The value of the dress is simply that every separate article of it expresses a law.* My young man is consequently apparelled with ideas, while Mr. Huyshe's young man is stiffened with facts ; the latter teaches one nothing ; from the former one learns everything. I need hardly say that this dress is good, not because it is seventeenth century, but because it is constructed on the true principles of costume, just as a square lintel or pointed arch is good, not because one may be Greek and the other Gothic, but because each of them is the best method of spanning a certain-sized opening, or resisting a certain weight. The fact, however, that this dress was generally worn in England two centuries and a half ago shows at least this, that the right laws of dress have been understood and realized in our country, and so in our country may be realized and understood again. As regards the absolute beauty of this dress and its meaning, I

should like to say a few words more. Mr. Wentworth Huyshe solemnly announces that 'he and those who think with him' cannot permit this question of beauty to be imported into the question of dress; that he and those who think with him take 'practical views on the subject,' and so on. Well, I will not enter here into a discussion as to how far any one who does not take beauty and the value of beauty into account can claim to be practical at all. The word practical is nearly always the last refuge of the uncivilized. Of all misused words it is the most evilly treated. But what I want to point out is that beauty is essentially organic; that is, it comes, not from without, but from within, not from any added prettiness, but from the perfection of its own being; and that consequently, as the body is beautiful, so all apparel that rightly clothes it must be beautiful also in its construction and in its lines.

I have no more desire to define ugliness than I have daring to define beauty; but still I would like to remind those who mock at beauty as being an unpractical thing of this fact, that an ugly thing is merely a thing that is badly made, or a thing that does not serve its purpose; that ugliness is want of fitness; that ugliness is failure; that ugliness is uselessness, such as ornament in the wrong place, while beauty, as

some one finely said, is the purgation of all superfluities. There is a divine economy about beauty ; it gives us just what is needful and no more, whereas ugliness is always extravagant ; ugliness is a spendthrift and wastes its material ; in fine, ugliness—and I would commend this remark to Mr. Wentworth Huyshe—ugliness, as much in costume as in anything else, is always the sign that somebody has been unpractical. So the costume of the future in England, if it is founded on the true laws of freedom, comfort, and adaptability to circumstances, cannot fail to be most beautiful also, because beauty is the sign always of the rightness of principles, the mystical seal that is set upon what is perfect, and upon what is perfect only.

As for your other correspondent, the first principle of dress that all garments should be hung from the shoulders and not from the waist seems to me to be generally approved of, although an ‘Old Sailor’ declares that no sailors or athletes ever suspend their clothes from the shoulders, but always from the hips. My own recollection of the river and running ground at Oxford—those two homes of Hellenism in our little Gothic town—is that the best runners and rowers (and my own college turned out many) wore always a tight jersey, with short drawers attached to it, the whole costume being woven

in one piece. As for sailors, it is true, I admit, and the bad custom seems to involve that constant 'hitching up' of the lower garments which, however popular in transpontine dramas, cannot, I think, but be considered an extremely awkward habit; and as all awkwardness comes from discomfort of some kind, I trust that this point in our sailor's dress will be looked to in the coming reform of our navy, for, in spite of all protests, I hope we are about to reform everything, from torpedoes to top-hats, and from crinolettes to cruises.

Then as regards clogs, my suggestion of them seems to have aroused a great deal of terror. Fashion in her high-heeled boots has screamed, and the dreadful word 'anachronism' has been used. Now, whatever is useful cannot be an anachronism. Such a word is applicable only to the revival of some folly; and, besides, in the England of our own day clogs are still worn in many of our manufacturing towns, such as Oldham. I fear that in Oldham they may not be dreams of beauty; in Oldham the art of inlaying them with ivory and with pearl may possibly be unknown; yet in Oldham they serve their purpose. Nor is it so long since they were worn by the upper classes of this country generally. Only a few days ago I had the pleasure of talking to a lady who remembered with affec-

tionate regret the clogs of her girlhood ; they were, according to her, not too high nor too heavy, and were provided, besides, with some kind of spring in the sole so as to make them the more supple for the foot in walking. Personally, I object to all additional height being given to a boot or shoe ; it is really against the proper principles of dress, although, if any such height is to be given it should be by means of two props ; not one ; but what I should prefer to see is some adaptation of the divided skirt or long and moderately loose knickerbockers. If, however, the divided skirt is to be of any positive value, it must give up all idea of ‘being identical in appearance with an ordinary skirt’ ; it must diminish the moderate width of each of its divisions, and sacrifice its foolish frills and flounces ; the moment it imitates a dress it is lost ; but let it visibly announce itself as what it actually is, and it will go far towards solving a real difficulty. I feel sure that there will be found many graceful and charming girls ready to adopt a costume founded on these principles, in spite of Mr. Wentworth Huyshe’s terrible threat that he will not propose to them as long as they wear it, for all charges of a want of womanly character in these forms of dress are really meaningless ; every right article of apparel belongs equally to both sexes, and there is

absolutely no such thing as a definitely feminine garment. One word of warning I should like to be allowed to give: The over-tunic should be made full and moderately loose; it may, if desired, be shaped more or less to the figure, but in no case should it be confined at the waist by any straight band or belt; on the contrary, it should fall from the shoulder to the knee, or below it, in fine curves and vertical lines, giving more freedom and consequently more grace. Few garments are so absolutely unbecoming as a belted tunic that reaches to the knees, a fact which I wish some of our Rosalinds would consider when they don doublet and hose; indeed, to the disregard of this artistic principle is due the ugliness, the want of proportion, in the Bloomer costume, a costume which in other respects is sensible.

## COSTUME

ARE we not all weary of him, that venerable impostor fresh from the steps of the Piazza di Spagna, who, in the leisure moments that he can spare from his customary organ, makes the round of the studios and is waited for in Holland Park? Do we not all recognize him, when, with the gay *insouciance* of his nation, he reappears on the walls of our summer exhibitions as everything that he is not, and as nothing that he is, glaring at us here as a patriarch of Canaan, here beaming as a brigand from the Abruzzi? Popular is he, this poor peripatetic professor of posing, with those whose joy it is to paint the posthumous portrait of the last philanthropist who in his lifetime had neglected to be photographed,—yet he is the sign of the decadence, the symbol of decay.

For all costumes are caricatures. The basis of Art is not the Fancy Ball. Where there is loveliness of dress, there is no dressing up. And so, were our national attire delightful in colour, and in construction simple and sincere; were

dress the expression of the loveliness that it shields and of the swiftness and motion that it does not impede ; did its lines break from the shoulder instead of bulging from the waist ; did the inverted wineglass cease to be the ideal of form ; were these things brought about, as brought about they will be, then would painting be no longer an artificial reaction against the ugliness of life, but become, as it should be, the natural expression of life's beauty. Nor would painting merely, but all the other arts also, be the gainers by a change such as that which I propose ; the gainers, I mean, through the increased atmosphere of Beauty by which the artists would be surrounded and in which they would grow up. For Art is not to be taught in Academies. It is what one looks at, not what one listens to, that makes the artist. The real schools should be the streets. There is not, for instance, a single delicate line, or delightful proportion, in the dress of the Greeks, which is not echoed exquisitely in their architecture. A nation arrayed in stove-pipe hats and dress-improvers might have built the Pantheon possibly, but the Parthenon never. And finally, there is this to be said : Art, it is true, can never have any other claim but her own perfection, and it may be that the artist, desiring merely to contemplate and to create, is wise in not busying

himself about change in others : yet wisdom is not always the best ; there are times when she sinks to the level of common-sense ; and from the passionate folly of those—and there are many—who desire that Beauty shall be confined no longer to the *bric-à-brac* of the collector and the dust of the museum, but shall be, as it should be, the natural and national inheritance of all,—from this noble unwisdom, I say, who knows what new loveliness shall be given to life, and, under these more exquisite conditions, what perfect artist born ? *Le milieu se renouvelant, l'art se renouvelle.*

## THE AMERICAN INVASION

(March 1887)

A TERRIBLE danger is hanging over the Americans in London. Their future and their reputation this season depend entirely on the success of Buffalo Bill and Mrs. Brown-Potter. The former is certain to draw; for English people are far more interested in American barbarism than they are in American civilization. When they sight Sandy Hook they look to their rifles and ammunition; and, after dining once at Delmonico's, start off for Colorado or California, for Montana or the Yellow Stone Park. Rocky Mountains charm them more than riotous millionaires; they have been known to prefer buffaloes to Boston. Why should they not? The cities of America are inexpressibly tedious. The Bostonians take their learning too sadly; culture with them is an accomplishment rather than an atmosphere; their 'Hub,' as they call it, is the paradise of prigs. Chicago is a sort of monster-shop, full of bustle and bores.

Political life at Washington is like political life in a suburban vestry. Baltimore is amusing for a week, but Philadelphia is dreadfully provincial ; and though one can dine in New York one could not dwell there. Better the Far West with its grizzly bears and its untamed cowboys, its free open-air life and its free open-air manners, its boundless prairie and its boundless mendacity ! This is what Buffalo Bill is going to bring to London ; and we have no doubt that London will fully appreciate his show.

With regard to Mrs. Brown-Potter, as acting is no longer considered absolutely essential for success on the English stage, there is really no reason why the pretty bright-eyed lady who charmed us all last June by her merry laugh and her nonchalant ways, should not—to borrow an expression from her native language—make a big boom and paint the town red. We sincerely hope she will ; for, on the whole, the American invasion has done English society a great deal of good. American women are bright, clever, and wonderfully cosmopolitan. Their patriotic feelings are limited to an admiration for Niagara and a regret for the Elevated Railway ; and, unlike the men, they never bore us with Bunkers Hill. They take their dresses from Paris and their manners from Piccadilly, and wear both charmingly. They have a quaint

pertness, a delightful conceit, a native self-assertion. They insist on being paid compliments and have almost succeeded in making Englishmen eloquent. For our aristocracy they have an ardent admiration ; they adore titles and are a permanent blow to Republican principles. In the art of amusing men they are adepts, both by nature and education, and can actually tell a story without forgetting the point —an accomplishment that is extremely rare among the women of other countries. It is true that they lack repose and that their voices are somewhat harsh and strident when they land first at Liverpool ; but after a time one gets to love those pretty whirlwinds in petticoats that sweep so recklessly through society and are so agitating to all duchesses who have daughters. There is something fascinating in their funny, exaggerated gestures and their petulant way of tossing the head. Their eyes have no magic nor mystery in them, but they challenge us for combat ; and when we engage we are always worsted. Their lips seem made for laughter and yet they never grimace. As for their voices they soon get them into tune. Some of them have been known to acquire a fashionable drawl in two seasons ; and after they have been presented to Royalty they all roll their R's as vigorously as a young equerry

or an old lady-in-waiting. Still, they never really lose their accent ; it keeps peeping out here and there, and when they chatter together they are like a bevy of peacocks. Nothing is more amusing than to watch two American girls greeting each other in a drawing-room or in the Row. They are like children with their shrill staccato cries of wonder, their odd little exclamations. Their conversation sounds like a series of exploding crackers ; they are exquisitely incoherent and use a sort of primitive, emotional language. After five minutes they are left beautifully breathless and look at each other half in amusement and half in affection. If a stolid young Englishman is fortunate enough to be introduced to them he is amazed at their extraordinary vivacity, their electric quickness of repartee, their inexhaustible store of curious catchwords. He never really understands them, for their thoughts flutter about with the sweet irresponsibility of butterflies ; but he is pleased and amused and feels as if he were in an aviary. On the whole, American girls have a wonderful charm and, perhaps, the chief secret of their charm is that they never talk seriously except about amusements. They have, however, one grave fault—their mothers. Dreary as were those old Pilgrim Fathers who left our shores more than two centuries ago to

found a New England beyond the seas, the Pilgrim Mothers who have returned to us in the nineteenth century are drearier still.

Here and there, of course, there are exceptions, but as a class they are either dull, dowdy or dyspeptic. It is only fair to the rising generation of America to state that they are not to blame for this. Indeed, they spare no pains at all to bring up their parents properly and to give them a suitable, if somewhat late, education. From its earliest years every American child spends most of its time in correcting the faults of its father and mother; and no one who has had the opportunity of watching an American family on the deck of an Atlantic steamer, or in the refined seclusion of a New York boarding-house, can fail to have been struck by this characteristic of their civilization. In America the young are always ready to give to those who are older than themselves the full benefits of their inexperience. A boy of only eleven or twelve years of age will firmly but kindly point out to his father his defects of manner or temper; will never weary of warning him against extravagance, idleness, late hours, unpunctuality, and the other temptations to which the aged are so particularly exposed; and sometimes, should he fancy that he is monopolizing too much of the conversation at

dinner, will remind him, across the table, of the new child's adage, 'Parents should be seen, not heard.' Nor does any mistaken idea of kindness prevent the little American girl from censuring her mother whenever it is necessary. Often, indeed, feeling that a rebuke conveyed in the presence of others is more truly efficacious than one merely whispered in the quiet of the nursery, she will call the attention of perfect strangers to her mother's general untidiness, her want of intellectual Boston conversation, immoderate love of iced water and green corn, stinginess in the matter of candy, ignorance of the usages of the best Baltimore Society, bodily ailments, and the like. In fact, it may be truly said that no American child is ever blind to the deficiencies of its parents, no matter how much it may love them.

Yet, somehow, this educational system has not been so successful as it deserved. In many cases, no doubt, the material with which the children had to deal was crude and incapable of real development; but the fact remains that the American mother is a tedious person. The American father is better, for he is never seen in London. He passes his life entirely in Wall Street and communicates with his family once a month by means of a telegram in cipher. The mother, however, is always with us, and, lacking

the quick imitative faculty of the younger generation, remains uninteresting and provincial to the last. In spite of her, however, the American girl is always welcome. She brightens our dull dinner parties for us and makes life go pleasantly by for a season. In the race for coronets she often carries off the prize; but, once she has gained the victory, she is generous and forgives her English rivals everything, even their beauty.

Warned by the example of her mother that American women do not grow old gracefully, she tries not to grow old at all and often succeeds. She has exquisite feet and hands, is always *bien chaussée et bien gantée* and can talk brilliantly upon any subject, provided that she knows nothing about it.

Her sense of humour keeps her from the tragedy of a *grande passion*, and, as there is neither romance nor humility in her love, she makes an excellent wife. What her ultimate influence on English life will be it is difficult to estimate at present; but there can be no doubt that, of all the factors that have contributed to the social revolution of London, there are few more important, and none more delightful, than the American Invasion.

# SERMONS IN STONES AT BLOOMSBURY

THE NEW SCULPTURE ROOM AT THE BRITISH  
MUSEUM

(October 1887)

THROUGH the exertions of Sir Charles Newton, to whom every student of classic art should be grateful, some of the wonderful treasures so long immured in the grimy vaults of the British Museum have at last been brought to light, and the new Sculpture Room now opened to the public will amply repay the trouble of a visit, even from those to whom art is a stumbling-block and a rock of offence. For setting aside the mere beauty of form, outline and mass, the grace and loveliness of design and the delicacy of technical treatment, here we have shown to us what the Greeks and Romans thought about death; and the philosopher, the preacher, the practical man of the world, and even the Philistine himself, cannot fail to be touched by these 'sermons in stones,' with their

deep significance, their fertile suggestion, their plain humanity. Common tombstones they are, most of them, the work not of famous artists but of simple handicraftsmen, only they were wrought in days when every handicraft was an art. The finest specimens, from the purely artistic point of view, are undoubtedly the two *stelai* found at Athens. They are both the tombstones of young Greek athletes. In one the athlete is represented handing his *strigil* to his slave, in the other the athlete stands alone, *strigil* in hand. They do not belong to the greatest period of Greek art, they have not the grand style of the Phidian age, but they are beautiful for all that, and it is impossible not to be fascinated by their exquisite grace and by the treatment which is so simple in its means, so subtle in its effect. All the tombstones, however, are full of interest. Here is one of two ladies of Smyrna who were so remarkable in their day that the city voted them honorary crowns; here is a Greek doctor examining a little boy who is suffering from indigestion; here is the memorial of Xanthippus who, probably, was a martyr to gout, as he is holding in his hand the model of a foot, intended, no doubt, as a votive offering to some god. A lovely *stele* from Rhodes gives us a family group. The husband is on horseback and is bidding farewell to

his wife, who seems as if she would follow him but is being held back by a little child. The pathos of parting from those we love is the central motive of Greek funeral art. It is repeated in every possible form, and each mute marble stone seems to murmur  $\chi\alpha\hat{\iota}\rho\epsilon$ . Roman art is different. It introduces vigorous and realistic portraiture and deals with pure family life far more frequently than Greek art does. They are very ugly, those stern-looking Roman men and women whose portraits are exhibited on their tombs, but they seem to have been loved and respected by their children and their servants. Here is the monument of Aphrodisius and Atilia, a Roman gentleman and his wife, who died in Britain many centuries ago, and whose tombstone was found in the Thames; and close by it stands a *stele* from Rome with the busts of an old married couple who are certainly marvellously ill-favoured. The contrast between the abstract Greek treatment of the idea of death and the Roman concrete realization of the individuals who have died is extremely curious.

Besides the tombstones, the new Sculpture Room contains some most fascinating examples of Roman decorative art under the Emperors. The most wonderful of all, and this alone is worth a trip to Bloomsbury, is a bas-relief representing a marriage scene. Juno Pronuba is

joining the hands of a handsome young noble and a very stately lady. There is all the grace of Perugino in this marble, all the grace of Raphael even. The date of it is uncertain, but the particular cut of the bridegroom's beard seems to point to the time of the Emperor Hadrian. It is clearly the work of Greek artists and is one of the most beautiful bas-reliefs in the whole Museum. There is something in it which reminds one of the music and the sweetness of Propertian verse. Then we have delightful friezes of children. One representing children playing on musical instruments might have suggested much of the plastic art of Florence. Indeed, as we view these marbles it is not difficult to see whence the Renaissance sprang and to what we owe the various forms of Renaissance art. The frieze of the Muses, each of whom wears in her hair a feather plucked from the wings of the vanquished sirens, is extremely fine; there is a lovely little bas-relief of two cupids racing in chariots; and the frieze of recumbent Amazons has some splendid qualities of design. A frieze of children playing with the armour of the god Mars should also be mentioned. It is full of fancy and delicate humour.

We hope that some more of the hidden treasures will shortly be catalogued and shown.

In the vaults at present there is a very remarkable bas-relief of the marriage of Cupid and Psyche, and another representing the professional mourners weeping over the body of the dead. The fine cast of the Lion of Chæronea should also be brought up, and so should the *stele* with the marvellous portrait of the Roman slave. Economy is an excellent public virtue, but the parsimony that allows valuable works of art to remain in the grime and gloom of a damp cellar is little short of a detestable public vice.

## LONDON MODELS

(January 1889)

PROFESSIONAL models are a purely modern invention. To the Greeks, for instance, they were quite unknown. Mr. Mahaffy, it is true, tells us that Pericles used to present peacocks to the great ladies of Athenian society in order to induce them to sit to his friend Phidias, and we know that Polygnotus introduced into his picture of the Trojan women the face of Elpinice, the celebrated sister of the great Conservative leader of the day, but these *grandes dames* clearly do not come under our category. As for the old masters, they undoubtedly made constant studies from their pupils and apprentices, and even their religious pictures are full of the portraits of their friends and relations, but they do not seem to have had the inestimable advantage of the existence of a class of people whose sole profession is to pose. In fact the model, in our sense of the word, is the direct creation of Academic Schools.

Every country now has its own models, except

America. In New York, and even in Boston, a good model is so great a rarity that most of the artists are reduced to painting Niagara and millionaires. In Europe, however, it is different. Here we have plenty of models, and of every nationality. The Italian models are the best. the natural grace of their attitudes, as well as the wonderful picturesqueness of their colouring, makes them facile—often too facile—subjects for the painter's brush. The French models, though not so beautiful as the Italian, possess a quickness of intellectual sympathy, a capacity, in fact, of understanding the artist, which is quite remarkable. They have also a great command over the varieties of facial expression, are peculiarly dramatic, and can chatter the *argot* of the *atelier* as cleverly as the critic of the *Gil Blas*. The English models form a class entirely by themselves. They are not so picturesque as the Italian, nor so clever as the French, and they have absolutely no tradition, so to speak, of their order. Now and then some old veteran knocks at a studio door, and proposes to sit as Ajax defying the lightning, or as King Lear upon the blasted heath. One of them some time ago called on a popular painter who, happening at the moment to require his services, engaged him, and told him to begin by kneeling down in the attitude of prayer. ‘Shall I be Biblical or

Shakespearean, sir?' asked the veteran. 'Well—Shakespearean,' answered the artist, wondering by what subtle *nuance* of expression the model would convey the difference. 'All right, sir,' said the professor of posing, and he solemnly knelt down and began to wink with his left eye! This class, however, is dying out. As a rule the model, nowadays, is a pretty girl, from about twelve to twenty-five years of age, who knows nothing about art, cares less, and is merely anxious to earn seven or eight shillings a day without much trouble. English models rarely look at a picture, and never venture on any æsthetic theories. In fact, they realize very completely Mr. Whistler's idea of the functions of an art critic, for they pass no criticisms at all. They accept all schools of art with the grand catholicity of the auctioneer, and sit to a fantastic young impressionist as readily as to a learned and laborious academician. They are neither for the Whistlerites nor against them; the quarrel between the school of facts and the school of effects touches them not; idealistic and naturalistic are words that convey no meaning to their ears; they merely desire that the studio shall be warm, and the lunch hot, for all charming artists give their models lunch.

As to what they are asked to do they are equally indifferent. On Monday they will don

the rags of a beggar-girl for Mr. Pumper, whose pathetic pictures of modern life draw such tears from the public, and on Tuesday they will pose in a peplum for Mr. Phœbus, who thinks that all really artistic subjects are necessarily b.c. They career gaily through all centuries and through all costumes, and, like actors, are interesting only when they are not themselves. They are extremely good-natured, and very accommodating. ‘What do you sit for?’ said a young artist to a model who had sent him in her card (all models, by the way, have cards and a small black bag). ‘Oh, for anything you like, sir,’ said the girl, ‘landscape if necessary! ’

Intellectually, it must be acknowledged, they are Philistines, but physically they are perfect—at least some are. Though none of them can talk Greek, many can look Greek, which to a nineteenth-century painter is naturally of great importance. If they are allowed, they chatter a great deal, but they never say anything. Their observations are the only *banalités* heard in Bohemia. However, though they cannot appreciate the artist as artist, they are quite ready to appreciate the artist as a man. They are very sensitive to kindness, respect and generosity. A beautiful model who had sat for two years to one of our most distinguished English painters, got engaged to a street vendor of penny ices.

On her marriage the painter sent her a pretty wedding present, and received in return a nice letter of thanks with the following remarkable postscript: 'Never eat the green ices!'

When they are tired a wise artist gives them a rest. Then they sit in a chair and read penny dreadfuls, till they are roused from the tragedy of literature to take their place again in the tragedy of art. A few of them smoke cigarettes. This, however, is regarded by the other models as showing a want of seriousness, and is not generally approved of. They are engaged by the day and by the half-day. The tariff is a shilling an hour, to which great artists usually add an omnibus fare. The two best things about them are their extraordinary prettiness, and their extreme respectability. As a class they are very well behaved, particularly those who sit for the figure, a fact which is curious or natural according to the view one takes of human nature. They usually marry well, and sometimes they marry the artist. For an artist to marry his model is as fatal as for a *gourmet* to marry his cook: the one gets no sittings, and the other gets no dinners.

On the whole the English female models are very naive, very natural, and very good-humoured. The virtues which the artist values most in them are prettiness and punctuality. Every sensible model consequently keeps a diary of her engage-

ments, and dresses neatly. The bad season is, of course, the summer, when the artists are out of town. However, of late years some artists have engaged their models to follow them, and the wife of one of our most charming painters has often had three or four models under her charge in the country, so that the work of her husband and his friends should not be interrupted. In France the models migrate *en masse* to the little seaport villages or forest hamlets where the painters congregate. The English models, however, wait patiently in London, as a rule, till the artists come back. Nearly all of them live with their parents, and help to support the house. They have every qualification for being immortalized in art except that of beautiful hands. The hands of the English model are nearly always coarse and red.

As for the male models, there is the veteran whom we have mentioned above. He has all the traditions of the grand style, and is rapidly disappearing with the school he represents. An old man who talks about Fuseli is, of course, unendurable, and, besides, patriarchs have ceased to be fashionable subjects. Then there is the true Academy model. He is usually a man of thirty, rarely good-looking, but a perfect miracle of muscles. In fact he is the apotheosis of anatomy, and is so conscious of his own splen-

dour that he tells you of his tibia and his thorax, as if no one else had anything of the kind. Then come the Oriental models. The supply of these is limited, but there are always about a dozen in London. They are very much sought after as they can remain immobile for hours, and generally possess lovely costumes. However, they have a very poor opinion of English art, which they regard as something between a vulgar personality and a commonplace photograph. Next we have the Italian youth who has come over specially to be a model, or takes to it when his organ is out of repair. He is often quite charming with his large melancholy eyes, his crisp hair, and his slim brown figure. It is true he eats garlic, but then he can stand like a faun and couch like a leopard, so he is forgiven. He is always full of pretty compliments, and has been known to have kind words of encouragement for even our greatest artists. As for the English lad of the same age, he never sits at all. Apparently he does not regard the career of a model as a serious profession. In any case he is rarely, if ever, to be got hold of. English boys, too, are difficult to find. Sometimes an ex-model who has a son will curl his hair, and wash his face, and bring him the round of the studios, all soap and shininess. The young school don't like him, but the older school do, and when he

appears on the walls of the Royal Academy he is called *The Infant Samuel*. Occasionally also an artist catches a couple of *gamins* in the gutter and asks them to come to his studio. The first time they always appear, but after that they don't keep their appointments. They dislike sitting still, and have a strong and perhaps natural objection to looking pathetic. Besides, they are always under the impression that the artist is laughing at them. It is a sad fact, but there is no doubt that the poor are completely unconscious of their own picturesqueness. Those of them who can be induced to sit do so with the idea that the artist is merely a benevolent philanthropist who has chosen an eccentric method of distributing alms to the undeserving. Perhaps the School Board will teach the London *gamin* his own artistic value, and then they will be better models than they are now. One remarkable privilege belongs to the Academy model, that of extorting a sovereign from any newly elected Associate or R.A. They wait at Burlington House till the announcement is made, and then race to the hapless artist's house. The one who arrives first receives the money. They have of late been much troubled at the long distances they have had to run, and they look with disfavour on the election of artists who live at Hampstead or at Bedford

Park, for it is considered a point of honour not to employ the underground railway, omnibuses, or any artificial means of locomotion. The race is to the swift.

Besides the professional posers of the studio there are posers of the Row, the posers at afternoon teas, the posers in politics, and the circus posers. All four classes are delightful, but only the last class is ever really decorative. Acrobats and gymnasts can give the young painter infinite suggestions, for they bring into their art an element of swiftness of motion and of constant change that the studio model necessary lacks. What is interesting in these 'slaves of the ring' is that with them Beauty is an unconscious result not a conscious aim, the result in fact of the mathematical calculation of curves and distances, of absolute precision of eye, of the scientific knowledge of the equilibrium of forces, and of perfect physical training. A good acrobat is always graceful, though grace is never his object; he is graceful because he does what he has to do in the best way in which it can be done—graceful because he is natural. If an ancient Greek were to come to life now, which considering the probable severity of his criticisms would be rather trying to our conceit, he would be found far oftener at the circus than at the theatre. A good circus is an oasis of

Hellenism in a world that reads too much to be wise, and thinks too much to be beautiful. If it were not for the running-ground at Eton, the towing-path at Oxford, the Thames swimming-baths, and the yearly circuses, humanity would forget the plastic perfection of its own form, and degenerate into a race of short-sighted professors and spectacled *précieuses*. Not that the circus proprietors are, as a rule, conscious of their high mission. Do they not bore us with the *haute école*, and weary us with Shakespearean clowns? Still, at least, they give us acrobats, and the acrobat is an artist. The mere fact that he never speaks to the audience shows how well he appreciates the great truth that the aim of art is not to reveal personality but to please. The clown may be blatant, but the acrobat is always beautiful. He is an interesting combination of the spirit of Greek sculpture with the spangles of the modern costumier. He has even had his niche in the novels of our age, and if *Manette Salomon* be the unmasking of the model, *Les Frères Zemganno* is the apotheosis of the acrobat.

As regards the influence of the ordinary model on our English school of painting, it cannot be said that it is altogether good. It is, of course, an advantage for the young artist sitting in his studio to be able to isolate 'a little corner of

life,' as the French say, from disturbing surroundings, and to study it under certain effects of light and shade. But this very isolation leads often to mere mannerism in the painter, and robs him of that broad acceptance of the general facts of life which is the very essence of art. Model-painting, in a word, while it may be the condition of art, is not by any means its aim. It is simply practice, not perfection. Its use trains the eye and the hand of the painter, its abuse produces in his work an effect of mere posing and prettiness. It is the secret of much of the artificiality of modern art, this constant posing of pretty people, and when art becomes artificial it becomes monotonous. Outside the little world of the studio, with its draperies and its *bric-à-brac*, lies the world of life with its infinite, its Shakespearean variety. We must, however, distinguish between the two kinds of models, those who sit for the figure and those who sit for the costume. The study of the first is always excellent, but the costume-model is becoming rather wearisome in modern pictures. It is really of very little use to dress up a London girl in Greek draperies and to paint her as a goddess. The robe may be the robe of Athens, but the face is usually the face of Brompton. Now and then, it is true, one comes across a model whose face is an exquisite anachronism,

and who looks lovely and natural in the dress of any century but her own. This, however, is rather rare. As a rule models are absolutely *de notre siècle*, and should be painted as such. Unfortunately they are not, and, as a consequence, we are shown every year a series of scenes from fancy dress balls which are called historical pictures, but are little more than mediocre representations of modern people masquerading. In France they are wiser. The French painter uses the model simply for study; for the finished picture he goes direct to life.

However, we must not blame the sitters for the shortcomings of the artists. The English models are a well-behaved and hard-working class, and if they are more interested in artists than in art, a large section of the public is in the same condition, and most of our modern exhibitions seem to justify its choice.

## LA SAINTE COURTISANE ;

### OR, THE WOMAN COVERED WITH JEWELS

*The scene represents a corner of a valley in the Thebaid. On the right hand of the stage is a cavern. In front of the cavern stands a great crucifix.*

*On the left [sand dunes].*

*The sky is blue like the inside of a cup of lapis lazuli. The hills are of red sand. Here and there on the hills there are clumps of thorns.*

FIRST MAN. Who is she? She makes me afraid.

She has a purple cloak and her hair is like threads of gold. I think she must be the daughter of the Emperor. I have heard the boatmen say that the Emperor has a daughter who wears a cloak of purple.

SECOND MAN. She has birds' wings upon her sandals, and her tunic is of the colour of green corn. It is like corn in spring when she stands still. It is like young corn troubled by the shadows of hawks when she moves. The pearls on her tunic are like many moons.

FIRST MAN. They are like the moons one sees

in the water when the wind blows from the hills.

SECOND MAN. I think she is one of the gods. I think she comes from Nubia.

FIRST MAN. I am sure she is the daughter of the Emperor. Her nails are stained with henna. They are like the petals of a rose. She has come here to weep for Adonis.

SECOND MAN. She is one of the gods. I do not know why she has left her temple. The gods should not leave their temples. If she speaks to us let us not answer and she will pass by.

FIRST MAN. She will not speak to us. She is the daughter of the Emperor.

MYRRHINA. Dwells he not here, the beautiful young hermit, he who will not look on the face of woman?

FIRST MAN. Of a truth it is here the hermit dwells.

MYRRHINA. Why will he not look on the face of woman?

SECOND MAN. We do not know.

MYRRHINA. Why do ye yourselves not look at me?

FIRST MAN. You are covered with bright stones, and you dazzle our eyes.

SECOND MAN. He who looks at the sun becomes blind. You are too bright to look at. It is

not wise to look at things that are very bright. Many of the priests in the temples are blind, and have slaves to lead them.

MYRRHINA. Where does he dwell, the beautiful young hermit who will not look on the face of woman? Has he a house of reeds or a house of burnt clay or does he lie on the hillside? Or does he make his bed in the rushes?

FIRST MAN. He dwells in that cavern yonder.

MYRRHINA. What a curious place to dwell in.

FIRST MAN. Of old a centaur lived there. When the hermit came the centaur gave a shrill cry, wept and lamented, and galloped away.

SECOND MAN. No. It was a white unicorn who lived in the cave. When it saw the hermit coming the unicorn knelt down and worshipped him. Many people saw it worshipping him.

FIRST MAN. I have talked with people who saw it.

SECOND MAN. Some say he was a hewer of wood and worked for hire. But that may not be true.

MYRRHINA. What gods then do ye worship? Or do ye worship any gods? There are those who have no gods to worship. The philo-

sophers who wear long beards and brown cloaks have no gods to worship. They wrangle with each other in the porticoes. The [ ] laugh at them.

FIRST MAN. We worship seven gods. We may not tell their names. It is a very dangerous thing to tell the names of the gods. No one should ever tell the name of his god. Even the priests who praise the gods all day long, and eat of their food with them, do not call them by their right names.

MYRRHINA. Where are these gods ye worship?

FIRST MAN. We hide them in the folds of our tunics. We do not show them to any one. If we showed them to any one they might leave us.

MYRRHINA. Where did ye meet with them?

FIRST MAN. They were given to us by an embalmer of the dead who had found them in a tomb. We served him for seven years.

MYRRHINA. The dead are terrible. I am afraid of Death.

FIRST MAN. Death is not a god. He is only the servant of the gods.

MYRRHINA. He is the only god I am afraid of. Ye have seen many of the gods?

FIRST MAN. We have seen many of them. One sees them chiefly at night time. They pass one by very swiftly. Once we saw some of

the gods at daybreak. They were walking across a plain.

MYRRHINA. Once as I was passing through the market place I heard a sophist from Cilicia say that there is only one God. He said it before many people.

FIRST MAN. That cannot be true. We have ourselves seen many, though we are but common men and of no account. When I saw them I hid myself in a bush. They did me no harm.

MYRRHINA. Tell me more about the beautiful young hermit. Talk to me about the beautiful young hermit who will not look on the face of woman. What is the story of his days? What mode of life has he?

FIRST MAN. We do not understand you.

MYRRHINA. What does he do, the beautiful young hermit? Does he sow or reap? Does he plant a garden or catch fish in a net? Does he weave linen on a loom? Does he set his hand to the wooden plough and walk behind the oxen?

SECOND MAN. He being a very holy man does nothing. We are common men and of no account. We toil all day long in the sun. Sometimes the ground is very hard.

MYRRHINA. Do the birds of the air feed him?

Do the jackals share their booty with him?

FIRST MAN. Every evening we bring him food. We do not think that the birds of the air feed him.

MYRRHINA. Why do you feed him? What profit have ye in so doing?

SECOND MAN. He is a very holy man. One of the gods whom he has offended has made him mad. We think he has offended the moon.

MYRRHINA. Go and tell him that one who has come from Alexandria desires to speak with him.

FIRST MAN. We dare not tell him. This hour he is praying to his God. We pray thee to pardon us for not doing thy bidding.

MYRRHINA. Are ye afraid of him?

FIRST MAN. We are afraid of him.

MYRRHINA. Why are ye afraid of him?

FIRST MAN. We do not know.

MYRRHINA. What is his name?

FIRST MAN. The voice that speaks to him at night time in the cavern calls to him by the name of Honorius. It was also by the name of Honorius that the three lepers who passed by once called to him. We think that his name is Honorius.

MYRRHINA. Why did the three lepers call to him?

FIRST MAN. That he might heal them.

MYRRHINA. Did he heal them.

SECOND MAN. No. They had committed some sin : it was for that reason they were lepers. Their hands and faces were like salt. One of them wore a mask of linen. He was a king's son.

MYRRHINA. What is the voice that speaks to him at night time in his cave?

FIRST MAN. We do not know whose voice it is. We think it is the voice of his God. For we have seen no man enter his cavern nor any come forth from it.

MYRRHINA. Honorius.

HONORIUS (*from within*). Who calls Honorius?

MYRRHINA. Come forth, Honorius.

My chamber is ceiled with cedar and odorous with myrrh. The pillars of my bed are of cedar and the hangings are of purple. My bed is strewn with purple and the steps are of silver. The hangings are sewn with silver pomegranates and the steps that are of silver are strewn with saffron and with myrrh. My lovers hang garlands round the pillars of my house. At night time they

come with the flute players and the players of the harp. They woo me with apples and and on the pavement of my courtyard they write my name in wine.

From the uttermost parts of the world my lovers come to me. The kings of the earth come to me and bring me presents.

When the Emperor of Byzantium heard of me he left his porphyry chamber and set sail in his galleys. His slaves bare no torches that none might know of his coming. When the King of Cyprus heard of me he sent me ambassadors. The two Kings of Libya who are brothers brought me gifts of amber.

I took the minion of Cæsar from Cæsar and made him my playfellow. He came to me at night in a litter. He was pale as a narcissus, and his body was like honey.

The son of the Prefect slew himself in my honour, and the Tetrarch of Cilicia scourged himself for my pleasure before my slaves.

The King of Hierapolis who is a priest and a robber set carpets for me to walk on.

Sometimes I sit in the circus and the gladiators fight beneath me. Once a Thracian who was my lover was caught in the net. I gave the signal for him to die

and the whole theatre applauded. Sometimes I pass through the gymnasium and watch the young men wrestling or in the race. Their bodies are bright with oil and their brows are wreathed with willow sprays and with myrtle. They stamp their feet on the sand when they wrestle and when they run the sand follows them like a little cloud. He at whom I smile leaves his companions and follows me to my home. At other times I go down to the harbour and watch the merchants unloading their vessels. Those that come from Tyre have cloaks of silk and earrings of emerald. Those that come from Massilia have cloaks of fine wool and earrings of brass. When they see me coming they stand on the prows of their ships and call to me, but I do not answer them. I go to the little taverns where the sailors lie all day long drinking black wine and playing with dice and I sit down with them.

I made the Prince my slave, and his slave who was a Tyrian I made my Lord for the space of a moon.

I put a figured ring on his finger and brought him to my house. I have wonderful things in my house.

The dust of the desert lies on your hair

and your feet are scratched with thorns  
and your body is scorched by the sun.  
Come with me, Honorius, and I will clothe  
you in a tunic of silk. I will smear your  
body with myrrh and pour spikenard on  
your hair. I will clothe you in hyacinth  
and put honey in your mouth. Love—

HONORIUS. There is no love but the love of God.

MYRRHINA. Who is He whose love is greater  
than that of mortal men?

HONORIUS. It is He whom thou seest on the  
cross, Myrrhina. He is the Son of God  
and was born of a virgin. Three wise men  
who were kings brought Him offerings, and  
the shepherds who were lying on the hills  
were wakened by a great light.

The Sibyls knew of His coming. The  
groves and the oracles spake of Him.  
David and the prophets announced Him.  
There is no love like the love of God nor  
any love that can be compared to it.

The body is vile, Myrrhina. God will  
raise thee up with a new body which will  
not know corruption, and thou wilt dwell  
in the Courts of the Lord and see Him  
whose hair is like fine wool and whose feet  
are of brass.

MYRRHINA. The beauty . . .

HONORIUS. The beauty of the soul increases till

it can see God. Therefore, Myrrhina, repent of thy sins. The robber who was crucified beside Him He brought into Paradise.

[*Exit.*]

MYRRHINA. How strangely he spake to me.  
And with what scorn did he regard me.  
I wonder why he spake to me so strangely.

HONORIUS. Myrrhina, the scales have fallen from my eyes and I see now clearly what I did not see before. Take me to Alexandria and let me taste of the seven sins.

MYRRHINA. Do not mock me, Honorius, nor speak to me with such bitter words. For I have repented of my sins and I am seeking a cavern in this desert where I too may dwell so that my soul may become worthy to see God.

HONORIUS. The sun is setting, Myrrhina. Come with me to Alexandria.

MYRRHINA. I will not go to Alexandria.

HONORIUS. Farewell, Myrrhina.

MYRRHINA. Honorius, farewell. No, no, do not go.

I have cursed my beauty for what it has done, and cursed the wonder of my body for the evil that it has brought upon you.

Lord, this man brought me to Thy feet.

He told me of Thy coming upon earth, and of the wonder of Thy birth, and the great wonder of Thy death also. By him, O Lord, Thou wast revealed to me.

HONORIUS. You talk as a child, Myrrhina, and without knowledge. Loosen your hands. Why didst thou come to this valley in thy beauty?

MYRRHINA. The God whom thou worshippest led me here that I might repent of my iniquities and know Him as the Lord.

HONORIUS. Why didst thou tempt me with words?

MYRRHINA. That thou shouldst see Sin in its painted mask and look on Death in its robe of Shame.

## L'ENVOI

An introduction to *Rose Leaf and Apple Leaf* by Rennell Rodd, published by J. M. Stoddart and Co., Philadelphia, 1882.

AMONGST the many young men in England who are seeking along with me to continue and to perfect the English Renaissance—*jeunes guerriers du drapeau romantique*, as Gautier would have called us—there is none whose love of art is more flawless and fervent, whose artistic sense of beauty is more subtle and more delicate—none, indeed, who is dearer to myself—than the young poet whose verses I have brought with me to America; verses full of sweet sadness, and yet full of joy; for the most joyous poet is not he who sows the desolate highways of this world with the barren seed of laughter, but he who makes his sorrow most musical, this indeed being the meaning of joy in art—that incomunicable element of artistic delight which, in poetry, for instance, comes from what Keats called ‘sensuous life of verse,’ the element of song in the singing, made so pleasurable to us by that wonder of motion which often has its origin in mere musical impulse, and in painting

is to be sought for, from the subject never, but from the pictorial charm only—the scheme and symphony of the colour, the satisfying beauty of the design: so that the ultimate expression of our artistic movement in painting has been, not in the spiritual vision of the Pre-Raphaelites, for all their marvel of Greek legend and their mystery of Italian song, but in the work of such men as Whistler and Albert Moore, who have raised design and colour to the ideal level of poetry and music. For the quality of their exquisite painting comes from the mere inventive and creative handling of line and colour, from a certain form and choice of beautiful workmanship, which, rejecting all literary reminiscence and all metaphysical idea, is in itself entirely satisfying to the æsthetic sense—is, as the Greeks would say, an end in itself; the effect of their work being like the effect given to us by music; for music is the art in which form and matter are always one—the art whose subject cannot be separated from the method of its expression; the art which most completely realizes for us the artistic ideal, and is the condition to which all the other arts are constantly aspiring.

Now, this increased sense of the absolutely satisfying value of beautiful workmanship, this recognition of the primary importance of the sensuous element in art, this love of art for art's

sake, is the point in which we of the younger school have made a departure from the teaching of Mr. Ruskin,—a departure definite and different and decisive.

Master indeed of the knowledge of all noble living and of the wisdom of all spiritual things will he be to us ever, seeing that it was he who by the magic of his presence and the music of his lips taught us at Oxford that enthusiasm for beauty which is the secret of Hellenism, and that desire for creation which is the secret of life, and filled some of us, at least, with the lofty and passionate ambition to go forth into far and fair lands with some message for the nations and some mission for the world, and yet in his art criticism, his estimate of the joyous element of art, his whole method of approaching art, we are no longer with him; for the keystone to his æsthetic system is ethical always. He would judge of a picture by the amount of noble moral ideas it expresses; but to us the channels by which all noble work in painting can touch, and does touch, the soul are not those of truths of life or metaphysical truths. To him perfection of workmanship seems but the symbol of pride, and incompleteness of technical resource the image of an imagination too limitless to find within the limits of form its complete expression, or of love too simple not to stammer in its

tale. But to us the rule of art is not the rule of morals. In an ethical system, indeed, of any gentle mercy good intentions will, one is fain to fancy, have their recognition; but of those that would enter the serene House of Beauty the question that we ask is not what they had ever meant to do, but what they have done. Their pathetic intentions are of no value to us, but their realized creations only. *Pour moi je préfère les poètes qui font des vers, les médecins qui sachent guérir, les peintres qui sachent peindre.*

Nor, in looking at a work of art, should we be dreaming of what it symbolises, but rather loving it for what it is. Indeed, the transcendental spirit is alien to the spirit of art. The metaphysical mind of Asia may create for itself the monstrous and many-breasted idol, but to the Greek, pure artist, that work is most instinct with spiritual life which conforms most closely to the perfect facts of physical life also. Nor, in its primary aspect, has a painting, for instance, any more spiritual message or meaning for us than a blue tile from the wall of Damascus, or a Hitzen vase. It is a beautifully coloured surface, nothing more, and affects us by no suggestion stolen from philosophy, no pathos pilfered from literature, no feeling filched from a poet, but by its own incommunicable artistic

essence—by that selection of truth which we call style, and that relation of values which is the draughtsmanship of painting, by the whole quality of the workmanship, the arabesque of the design, the splendour of the colour, for these things are enough to stir the most divine and remote of the chords which make music in our soul, and colour, indeed, is of itself a mystical presence on things, and tone a kind of sentiment . . . all these poems aim, as I said, at producing a purely artistic effect, and have the rare and exquisite quality that belongs to work of that kind; and I feel that the entire subordination in our æsthetic movement of all merely emotional and intellectual motives to the vital informing poetic principle is the surest sign of our strength.

But it is not enough that a work of art should conform to the æsthetic demands of the age: there should be also about it, if it is to give us any permanent delight, the impress of a distinct individuality. Whatever work we have in the nineteenth century must rest on the two poles of personality and perfection. And so in this little volume, by separating the earlier and more simple work from the work that is later and stronger and possesses increased technical power and more artistic vision, one might weave these disconnected poems, these stray and scattered

threads, into one fiery-coloured strand of life, noting first a boy's mere gladness of being young, with all its simple joy in field and flower, in sunlight and in song, and then the bitterness of sudden sorrow at the ending by Death of one of the brief and beautiful friendships of one's youth, with all those unanswered longings and questionings unsatisfied by which we vex, so uselessly, the marble face of death ; the artistic contrast between the discontented incompleteness of the spirit and the complete perfection of the style that expresses it forming the chief element of the æsthetic charm of these particular poems ;—and then the birth of Love, and all the wonder and the fear and the perilous delight of one on whose boyish brows the little wings of love have beaten for the first time ; and the love-songs, so dainty and delicate, little swallow-flights of music, and full of such fragrance and freedom that they might all be sung in the open air and across moving water ; and then autumn, coming with its choirless woods and odorous decay and ruined loveliness, Love lying dead ; and the sense of the mere pity of it.

One might stop there, for from a young poet one should ask for no deeper chords of life than those that love and friendship make eternal for us ; and the best poems in the volume belong clearly to a later time, a time when these real

experiences become absorbed and gathered up into a form which seems from such real experiences to be the most alien and the most remote ; when the simple expression of joy or sorrow suffices no longer, and lives rather in the stateliness of the cadenced metre, in the music and colour of the linked words, than in any direct utterance ; lives, one might say, in the perfection of the form more than in the pathos of the feeling. And yet, after the broken music of love and the burial of love in the autumn woods, we can trace that wandering among strange people, and in lands unknown to us, by which we try so pathetically to heal the hurts of the life we know, and that pure and passionate devotion to Art which one gets when the harsh reality of life has too suddenly wounded one, and is with discontent or sorrow marring one's youth, just as often, I think, as one gets it from any natural joy of living ; and that curious intensity of vision by which, in moments of overmastering sadness and despair ungovernable, artistic things will live in one's memory with a vivid realism caught from the life which they help one to forget—an old grey tomb in Flanders with a strange legend on it, making one think how, perhaps, passion does live on after death ; a necklace of blue and amber beads and a broken mirror found in a girl's grave at Rome, a marble

image of a boy habited like Erôs, and with the pathetic tradition of a great king's sorrow lingering about it like a purple shadow,—over all these the tired spirit broods with that calm and certain joy that one gets when one has found something that the ages never dull and the world cannot harm ; and with it comes that desire of Greek things which is often an artistic method of expressing one's desire for perfection ; and that longing for the old dead days which is so modern, so incomplete, so touching, being, in a way, the inverted torch of Hope, which burns the hand it should guide ; and for many things a little sadness, and for all things a great love ; and lastly, in the pinewood by the sea, once more the quick and vital pulse of joyous youth leaping and laughing in every line, the frank and fearless freedom of wave and wind waking into fire life's burnt-out ashes and into song the silent lips of pain,—how clearly one seems to see it all, the long colonnade of pines with sea and sky peeping in here and there like a flitting of silver ; the open place in the green, deep heart of the wood with the little moss-grown altar to the old Italian god in it ; and the flowers all about, cyclamen in the shadowy places, and the stars of the white narcissus lying like snow-flakes over the grass, where the quick, bright-eyed lizard starts by the stone, and the snake lies coiled

lazily in the sun on the hot sand, and overhead the gossamer floats from the branches like thin, tremulous threads of gold,—the scene is so perfect for its motive, for surely here, if anywhere, the real gladness of life might be revealed to one's youth—the gladness that comes, not from the rejection, but from the absorption, of all passion, and is like that serene calm that dwells in the faces of the Greek statues, and which despair and sorrow cannot touch, but intensify only.

In some such way as this we could gather up these strewn and scattered petals of song into one perfect rose of life, and yet, perhaps, in so doing, we might be missing the true quality of the poems; one's real life is so often the life that one does not lead; and beautiful poems, like threads of beautiful silks, may be woven into many patterns and to suit many designs, all wonderful and all different: and romantic poetry, too, is essentially the poetry of impressions, being like that latest school of painting, the school of Whistler and Albert Moore, in its choice of situation as opposed to subject; in its dealing with the exceptions rather than with the types of life; in its brief intensity; in what one might call its fiery-coloured momentariness, it being indeed the momentary situations of life, the momentary aspects of nature, which poetry

and painting now seek to render for us. Sincerity and constancy will the artist, indeed, have always; but sincerity in art is merely that plastic perfection of execution without which a poem or a painting, however noble its sentiment or human its origin, is but wasted and unreal work, and the constancy of the artist cannot be to any definite rule or system of living, but to that principle of beauty only through which the inconstant shadows of his life are in their most fleeting moment arrested and made permanent. He will not, for instance, in intellectual matters acquiesce in that facile orthodoxy of our day which is so reasonable and so artistically uninteresting, nor yet will he desire that fiery faith of the antique time which, while it intensified, yet limited the vision; still less will he allow the calm of his culture to be marred by the discordant despair of doubt or the sadness of a sterile scepticism; for the Valley Perilous, where ignorant armies clash by night, is no resting-place meet for her to whom the gods have assigned the clear upland, the serene height, and the sunlit air,—rather will he be always curiously testing new forms of belief, tinging his nature with the sentiment that still lingers about some beautiful creeds, and searching for experience itself, and not for the fruits of experience; when he has got its secret, he will leave without regret much that

was once very precious to him. 'I am always insincere,' says Emerson somewhere, 'as knowing that there are other moods': '*Les émotions*,' wrote Théophile Gautier once in a review of Arsène Houssaye, '*Les émotions, ne se ressemblent pas, mais être ému—voilà l'important.*'

Now, this is the secret of the art of the modern romantic school, and gives one the right keynote for its apprehension; but the real quality of all work which, like Mr. Rodd's, aims, as I said, at a purely artistic effect, cannot be described in terms of intellectual criticism; it is too intangible for that. One can perhaps convey it best in terms of the other arts, and by reference to them; and, indeed, some of these poems are as iridescent and as exquisite as a lovely fragment of Venetian glass; others as delicate in perfect workmanship and as single in natural motive as an etching by Whistler is, or one of those beautiful little Greek figures which in the olive woods round Tanagra men can still find, with the faint gilding and the fading crimson not yet fled from hair and lips and raiment; and many of them seem like one of Corot's twilights just passing into music; for not merely in visible colour, but in sentiment also—which is the colour of poetry—may there be a kind of tone.

But I think that the best likeness to the

quality of this young poet's work I ever saw was in the landscape by the Loire. We were staying once, he and I, at Amboise, that little village with its grey slate roofs and steep streets and gaunt, grim gateway, where the quiet cottages nestle like white pigeons into the sombre clefts of the great bastioned rock, and the stately Renaissance houses stand silent and apart—very desolate now, but with some memory of the old days still lingering about the delicately-twisted pillars, and the carved doorways, with their grotesque animals, and laughing masks, and quaint heraldic devices, all reminding one of a people who could not think life real till they had made it fantastic. And above the village, and beyond the bend of the river, we used to go in the afternoon, and sketch from one of the big barges that bring the wine in autumn and the wood in winter down to the sea, or lie in the long grass and make plans *pour la gloire, et pour ennuyer les Philistins*, or wander along the low, sedgy banks, 'matching our reeds in sportive rivalry,' as comrades used in the old Sicilian days; and the land was an ordinary land enough, and bare, too, when one thought of Italy, and how the oleanders were robing the hillsides by Genoa in scarlet, and the cyclamen filling with its purple every valley from Florence to Rome;

for there was not much real beauty, perhaps, in it, only long, white dusty roads and straight rows of formal poplars; but, now and then, some little breaking gleam of broken light would lend to the grey field and the silent barn a secret and a mystery that were hardly their own, would transfigure for one exquisite moment the peasants passing down through the vineyard, or the shepherd watching on the hill, would tip the willows with silver and touch the river into gold; and the wonder of the effect, with the strange simplicity of the material, always seemed to me to be a little like the quality of these the verses of my friend.

# THE RISE OF HISTORICAL CRITICISM<sup>1</sup>

## IV

IT is evident that here Thucydides is ready to admit the variety of manifestations which external causes bring about in their workings on the uniform character of the nature of man. Yet, after all is said, these are perhaps but very general statements: the ordinary effects of peace and war are dwelt on, but there is no real analysis of the immediate causes and general laws of the phenomena of life, nor does Thucydides seem to recognize the truth that if humanity proceeds in circles, the circles are always widening.

Perhaps we may say that with him the philosophy of history is partly in the metaphysical

<sup>1</sup> The first portion of this essay is given at the end of the volume containing *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and Other Prose Pieces*. Recently the remainder of the original manuscript has been discovered, and is here published for the first time. It was written for the Chancellor's English Essay Prize at Oxford in 1879, the subject being 'Historical Criticism among the Ancients.' The prize was not awarded. To Professor J. W. Mackail thanks are due for revising the proofs.

stage, and see, in the progress of this idea from Herodotus to Polybius, the exemplification of the Comtian law of the three stages of thought, the theological, the metaphysical, and the scientific : for truly out of the vagueness of theological mysticism this conception which we call the Philosophy of History was raised to a scientific principle, according to which the past was explained and the future predicted by reference to general laws.

Now, just as the earliest account of the nature of the progress of humanity is to be found in Plato, so in him we find the first explicit attempt to found a universal philosophy of history upon wide rational grounds. Having created an ideally perfect state, the philosopher proceeds to give an elaborate theory of the complex causes which produce revolutions, of the moral effects of various forms of government and education, of the rise of the criminal classes and their connection with pauperism, and, in a word, to create history by the deductive method and to proceed from *a priori* psychological principles to discover the governing laws of the apparent chaos of political life.

There have been many attempts since Plato to deduce from a single philosophical principle all the phenomena which experience subsequently verifies for us. Fichte thought he could predict

the world-plan from the idea of universal time. Hegel dreamed he had found the key to the mysteries of life in the development of freedom, and Krause in the categories of being. But the one scientific basis on which the true philosophy of history must rest is the complete knowledge of the laws of human nature in all its wants, its aspirations, its powers and its tendencies: and this great truth, which Thucydides may be said in some measure to have apprehended, was given to us first by Plato.

Now, it cannot be accurately said of this philosopher that either his philosophy or his history is entirely and simply *a priori*. *On est de son siècle même quand on y proteste*, and so we find in him continual references to the Spartan mode of life, the Pythagorean system, the general characteristics of Greek tyrannies and Greek democracies. For while, in his account of the method of forming an ideal state, he says that the political artist is indeed to fix his gaze on the sun of abstract truth in the heavens of the pure reason, but is sometimes to turn to the realization of the ideals on earth: yet, after all, the general character of the Platonic method, which is what we are specially concerned with, is essentially deductive and *a priori*. And he himself, in the building up of his *Nephelococcygia*, certainly starts with a *καθαρὸς πίναξ*, making a clean sweep of all his-

tory and all experience; and it was essentially as an *a priori* theorist that he is criticized by Aristotle, as we shall see later.

To proceed to closer details regarding the actual scheme of the laws of political revolutions as drawn out by Plato, we must first note that the primary cause of the decay of the ideal state is the general principle, common to the vegetable and animal worlds as well as to the world of history, that all created things are fated to decay—a principle which, though expressed in the terms of a mere metaphysical abstraction, is yet perhaps in its essence scientific. For we too must hold that a continuous redistribution of matter and motion is the inevitable result of the normal persistence of Force, and that perfect equilibrium is as impossible in politics as it certainly is in physics.

The secondary causes which mar the perfection of the Platonic 'city of the sun' are to be found in the intellectual decay of the race consequent on injudicious marriages and in the Philistine elevation of physical achievements over mental culture; while the hierarchical succession of Timocracy and Oligarchy, Democracy and Tyranny, is dwelt on at great length and its causes analysed in a very dramatic and psychological manner, if not in that sanctioned by the actual order of history.

And indeed it is apparent at first sight that the Platonic succession of states represents rather the succession of ideas in the philosophic mind than any historical succession of time.

Aristotle meets the whole simply by an appeal to facts. If the theory of the periodic decay of all created things, he urges, be scientific, it must be universal, and so true of all the other states as well as of the ideal. Besides, a state usually changes into its contrary and not to the form next to it; so the ideal state would not change into Timocracy; while Oligarchy, more often than Tyranny, succeeds Democracy. Plato, besides, says nothing of what a Tyranny would change to. According to the cycle theory it ought to pass into the ideal state again, but as a fact one Tyranny is changed into another as at Sicyon, or into a Democracy as at Syracuse, or into an Aristocracy as at Carthage. The example of Sicily, too, shows that an Oligarchy is often followed by a Tyranny, as at Leontini and Gela. Besides, it is absurd to represent greed as the chief motive of decay, or to talk of avarice as the root of Oligarchy, when in nearly all true oligarchies money-making is forbidden by law. And finally the Platonic theory neglects the different kinds of democracies and of tyrannies.

Now nothing can be more important than this passage in Aristotle's *Politics* (v. 12.), which may

be said to mark an era in the evolution of historical criticism. For there is nothing on which Aristotle insists so strongly as that the generalizations from facts ought to be added to the data of the *a priori* method—a principle which we know to be true not merely of deductive speculative politics but of physics also: for are not the residual phenomena of chemists a valuable source of improvement in theory?

His own method is essentially historical though by no means empirical. On the contrary, this far-seeing thinker, rightly styled *il maestro di color che sanno*, may be said to have apprehended clearly that the true method is neither exclusively empirical nor exclusively speculative, but rather a union of both in the process called Analysis or the Interpretation of Facts, which has been defined as the application to facts of such general conceptions as may fix the important characteristics of the phenomena, and present them permanently in their true relations. He too was the first to point out, what even in our own day is incompletely appreciated, that nature, including the development of man, is not full of incoherent episodes like a bad tragedy, that inconsistency and anomaly are as impossible in the moral as they are in the physical world, and that where the superficial observer thinks he sees a revolution the philosophical critic discerns

merely the gradual and rational evolution of the inevitable results of certain antecedents.

And while admitting the necessity of a psychological basis for the philosophy of history, he added to it the important truth that man, to be apprehended in his proper position in the universe as well as in his natural powers, must be studied from below in the hierarchical progression of higher function from the lower forms of life. The important maxim, that to obtain a clear conception of anything we must 'study it in its growth from the very beginning' is formally set down in the opening of the *Politics*, where, indeed, we shall find the other characteristic features of the modern Evolutionary theory, such as the 'Differentiation of Function' and the 'Survival of the Fittest' explicitly set forth.

What a valuable step this was in the improvement of the method of historical criticism it is needless to point out. By it, one may say, the true thread was given to guide one's steps through the bewildering labyrinth of facts. For history (to use terms with which Aristotle has made us familiar) may be looked at from two essentially different standpoints; either as a work of art whose *τέλος* or final cause is external to it and imposed on it from without; or as an organism containing the law of its own development in itself, and working out its perfection merely by

the fact of being what it is. Now, if we adopt the former, which we may style the theological view, we shall be in continual danger of tripping into the pitfall of some *a priori* conclusion—that bourne from which, it has been truly said, no traveller ever returns.

The latter is the only scientific theory and was apprehended in its fulness by Aristotle, whose application of the inductive method to history, and whose employment of the evolutionary theory of humanity, show that he was conscious that the philosophy of history is nothing separate from the facts of history but is contained in them, and that the rational law of the complex phenomena of life, like the ideal in the world of thought, is to be reached through the facts, not superimposed on them—κατὰ πολλῶν not παρὰ πολλά.

And finally, in estimating the enormous debt which the science of historical criticism owes to Aristotle, we must not pass over his attitude towards those two great difficulties in the formation of a philosophy of history on which I have touched above. I mean the assertion of extra-natural interference with the normal development of the world and of the incalculable influence exercised by the power of free will.

Now, as regards the former, he may be said to have neglected it entirely. The special acts of providence proceeding from God's immediate

government of the world, which Herodotus saw as mighty landmarks in history, would have been to him essentially disturbing elements in that universal reign of law, the extent of whose limitless empire he of all the great thinkers of antiquity was the first explicitly to recognize.

Standing aloof from the popular religion as well as from the deeper conceptions of Herodotus and the Tragic School, he no longer thought of God as of one with fair limbs and treacherous face haunting wood and glade, nor would he see in him a jealous judge continually interfering in the world's history to bring the wicked to punishment and the proud to a fall. God to him was the incarnation of the pure Intellect, a being whose activity was the contemplation of his own perfection, one whom Philosophy might imitate but whom prayers could never move, to the sublime indifference of whose passionless wisdom what were the sons of men, their desires or their sins? While, as regards the other difficulty and the formation of a philosophy of history, the conflict of free will with general laws appears first in Greek thought in the usual theological form in which all great ideas seem to be cradled at their birth.

It was such legends as those of Oedipus and Adrastus, exemplifying the struggles of individual humanity against the overpowering force

of circumstances and necessity, which gave to the early Greeks those same lessons which we of modern days draw, in somewhat less artistic fashion, from the study of statistics and the laws of physiology.

In Aristotle, of course, there is no trace of supernatural influence. The Furies, which drive their victim into sin first and then punishment, are no longer 'viper-tressed goddesses with eyes and mouth afame,' but those evil thoughts which harbour within the impure soul. In this, as in all other points, to arrive at Aristotle is to reach the pure atmosphere of scientific and modern thought.

But while he rejected pure necessitarianism in its crude form as essentially a *reductio ad absurdum* of life, he was fully conscious of the fact that the will is not a mysterious and ultimate unit of force beyond which we cannot go and whose special characteristic is inconsistency, but a certain creative attitude of the mind which is, from the first, continually influenced by habits, education and circumstance; so absolutely modifiable, in a word, that the good and the bad man alike seem to lose the power of free will; for the one is morally unable to sin, the other physically incapacitated for reformation.

And of the influence of climate and temperature in forming the nature of man (a conception

perhaps pressed too far in modern days when the 'race theory' is supposed to be a sufficient explanation of the Hindoo, and the latitude and longitude of a country the best guide to its morals<sup>1)</sup> Aristotle is completely unaware. I do not allude to such smaller points as the oligarchical tendencies of a horse-breeding country and the democratic influence of the proximity of the sea (important though they are for the consideration of Greek history), but rather to those wider views in the seventh book of his *Politics*, where he attributes the happy union in the Greek character of intellectual attainments with the spirit of progress to the temperate climate they enjoyed, and points out how the extreme cold of the north dulls the mental faculties of its inhabitants and renders them incapable of social organization or extended empire; while to the enervating heat of eastern countries was due that want of spirit and bravery which then, as now, was the characteristic of the population in that quarter of the globe.

Thucydides has shown the casual connection between political revolutions and the fertility of the soil, but goes a step farther and points out

<sup>1</sup> Cousin errs a good deal in this respect. To say, as he did, 'Give me the latitude and the longitude of a country, its rivers and its mountains, and I will deduce the race,' is surely a glaring exaggeration.

the psychological influences on a people's character exercised by the various extremes of climate —in both cases the first appearance of a most valuable form of historical criticism.

To the development of Dialectic, as to God, intervals of time are of no account. From Plato and Aristotle we pass direct to Polybius.

The progress of thought from the philosopher of the Academe to the Arcadian historian may be best illustrated by a comparison of the method by which each of the three writers, whom I have selected as the highest expression of the rationalism of his respective age, attained to his ideal state: for the latter conception may be in a measure regarded as representing the most spiritual principle which they could discern in history.

Now, Plato created his on *a priori* principles: Aristotle formed his by an analysis of existing constitutions; Polybius found his realized for him in the actual world of fact. Aristotle criticized the deductive speculations of Plato by means of inductive negative instances, but Polybius will not take the 'Cloud City' of the *Republic* into account at all. He compares it to an athlete who has never run on 'Constitution Hill,' to a statue so beautiful that it is entirely removed from the ordinary conditions of humanity, and consequently from the canons of criticism.

The Roman state had attained in his eyes,

by means of the mutual counteraction of three opposing forces,<sup>1</sup> that stable equilibrium in politics which was the ideal of all the theoretical writers of antiquity. And in connection with this point it will be convenient to notice here how much truth there is contained in the accusation so often brought against the ancients that they knew nothing of the idea of Progress, for the meaning of many of their speculations will be hidden from us if we do not try and comprehend first what their aim was, and secondly why it was so.

Now, like all wide generalities, this statement is at least inaccurate. The prayer of Plato's ideal city—*ἐξ ἀγαθῶν ἀμείνους, καὶ ἐξ ὡφελιμῶν ὡφελιμωτέρους ἀεὶ τὸν ἐκγόνους γίγνεσθαι*, might be written as a text over the door of the last Temple to Humanity raised by the disciples of Fourier and Saint-Simon, but it is certainly true that their ideal principle was order and permanence, not indefinite progress. For, setting aside the artistic prejudices which would have led the Greeks to reject this idea of unlimited improvement, we may note that the modern conception of progress rests partly on the new enthusiasm and worship of humanity, partly on the splendid hopes of material improvements in civilization

<sup>1</sup> The monarchical, aristocratical, and democratic elements of the Roman constitution are referred to.

which applied science has held out to us, two influences from which ancient Greek thought seems to have been strangely free. For the Greeks marred the perfect humanism of the great men whom they worshipped, by imputing to them divinity and its supernatural powers; while their science was eminently speculative and often almost mystic in its character, aiming at culture and not utility, at higher spirituality and more intense reverence for law, rather than at the increased facilities of locomotion and the cheap production of common things about which our modern scientific school ceases not to boast. And lastly, and perhaps chiefly, we must remember that the 'plague spot of all Greek states,' as one of their own writers has called it, was the terrible insecurity to life and property which resulted from the factions and revolutions which ceased not to trouble Greece at all times, raising a spirit of fanaticism such as religion raised in the middle ages of Europe.

These considerations, then, will enable us to understand first how it was that, radical and unscrupulous reformers as the Greek political theorists were, yet, their end once attained, no modern conservatives raised such outcry against the slightest innovation. Even acknowledged improvements in such things as the games of children or the modes of music were regarded

by them with feelings of extreme apprehension as the herald of the *drapeau rouge* of reform. And secondly, it will show us how it was that Polybius found his ideal in the commonwealth of Rome, and Aristotle, like Mr. Bright, in the middle classes. Polybius, however, is not content merely with pointing out his ideal state, but enters at considerable length into the question of those general laws whose consideration forms the chief essential of the philosophy of history.

He starts by accepting the general principle that all things are fated to decay (which I noticed in the case of Plato), and that 'as iron produces rust and as wood breeds the animals that destroy it, so every state has in it the seeds of its own corruption.' He is not, however, content to rest there, but proceeds to deal with the more immediate causes of revolutions, which he says are twofold in nature, either external or internal. Now, the former, depending as they do on the synchronous conjunction of other events outside the sphere of scientific estimation, are from their very character incalculable; but the latter, though assuming many forms, always result from the over-great preponderance of any single element to the detriment of the others, the rational law lying at the base of all varieties of political changes being that stability can result

only from the statical equilibrium produced by the counteraction of opposing parts, since the more simple a constitution is the more it is insecure. Plato had pointed out before how the extreme liberty of a democracy always resulted in despotism, but Polybius analyses the law and shows the scientific principles on which it rests.

The doctrine of the instability of pure constitutions forms an important era in the philosophy of history. Its special applicability to the politics of our own day has been illustrated in the rise of the great Napoleon, when the French state had lost those divisions of caste and prejudice, of landed aristocracy and moneyed interest, institutions in which the vulgar see only barriers to Liberty but which are indeed the only possible defences against the coming of that periodic Sirius of politics, the *τίραννος ἐκ προστατικῆς ρίζης*.

There is a principle which Tocqueville never wearies of explaining, and which has been subsumed by Mr. Herbert Spencer under that general law common to all organic bodies which we call the Instability of the Homogeneous. The various manifestations of this law, as shown in the normal, regular revolutions and evolutions of the different forms of government,<sup>1</sup> are ex-

<sup>1</sup> Polybius, vi. 9, *αὕτη πολιτειῶν ἀνακύκλωσις, αὕτη φύσεως οἰκονομία*.

pounded with great clearness by Polybius, who claimed for his theory in the Thucydidean spirit, that it is a *κτῆμα ἐσ ἀεί*, not a mere *ἀγώνισμα ἐσ τὸ παραχρῆμα*, and that a knowledge of it will enable the impartial observer<sup>1</sup> to discover at any time what period of its constitutional evolution any particular state has already reached and into what form it will be next differentiated, though possibly the exact time of the changes may be more or less uncertain.<sup>2</sup>

Now in this necessarily incomplete account of the laws of political revolutions as expounded by Polybius enough perhaps has been said to show what is his true position in the rational development of the 'Idea' which I have called the Philosophy of History, because it is the unifying of history. Seen darkly as it is through the glass of religion in the pages of Herodotus, more metaphysical than scientific with Thucydides, Plato strove to seize it by the eagle-flight of speculation, to reach it with the eager grasp of a soul impatient of those slower and surer inductive methods which Aristotle, in his trenchant criticism of his great master, showed were more brilliant than any vague theory, if the test of brilliancy is truth.

<sup>1</sup> χωρὶς δργῆς ή φθόνου ποιούμενος τὴν ἀπόδειξιν.

<sup>2</sup> The various stages are σύστασις, αὐξησις, ἀκμή, μεταβολὴ ἐσ τοῦμπαλιν.

What then is the position of Polybius? Does any new method remain for him? Polybius was one of those many men who are born too late to be original. To Thucydides belongs the honour of being the first in the history of Greek thought to discern the supreme calm of law and order underlying the fitful storms of life, and Plato and Aristotle each represents a great new principle. To Polybius belongs the office—how noble an office he made it his writings show—of making more explicit the ideas which were implicit in his predecessors, of showing that they were of wider applicability and perhaps of deeper meaning than they had seemed before, of examining with more minuteness the laws which they had discovered, and finally of pointing out more clearly than any one had done the range of science and the means it offered for analysing the present and predicting what was to come. His office thus was to gather up what they had left, to give their principles new life by a wider application.

Polybius ends this great diapason of Greek thought. When the philosophy of history appears next, as in Plutarch's tract on 'Why God's anger is delayed,' the pendulum of thought had swung back to where it began. His theory was introduced to the Romans under the cultured style of Cicero, and was welcomed by them as

the philosophical panegyric of their state. The last notice of it in Latin literature is in the pages of Tacitus, who alludes to the stable polity formed out of these elements as a constitution easier to commend than to produce and in no case lasting. Yet Polybius had seen the future with no uncertain eye, and had prophesied the rise of the Empire from the unbalanced power of the ochlocracy fifty years and more before there was joy in the Julian household over the birth of that boy who, borne to power as the champion of the people, died wearing the purple of a king.

No attitude of historical criticism is more important than the means by which the ancients attained to the philosophy of history. The principle of heredity can be exemplified in literature as well as in organic life: Aristotle, Plato and Polybius are the lineal ancestors of Fichte and Hegel, of Vico and Cousin, of Montesquieu and Tocqueville.

As my aim is not to give an account of historians but to point out those great thinkers whose methods have furthered the advance of this spirit of historical criticism, I shall pass over those annalists and chroniclers who intervened between Thucydides and Polybius. Yet perhaps it may serve to throw new light on the real nature of this spirit and its intimate connection

with all other forms of advanced thought if I give some estimate of the character and rise of those many influences prejudicial to the scientific study of history which cause such a wide gap between these two historians.

Foremost among these is the growing influence of rhetoric and the Isocratean school, which seems to have regarded history as an arena for the display of either pathos or paradoxes, not a scientific investigation into laws.

The new age is the age of style. The same spirit of exclusive attention to form which made Euripides often, like Swinburne, prefer music to meaning and melody to morality, which gave to the later Greek statues that refined effeminacy, that overstrained gracefulness of attitude, was felt in the sphere of history. The rules laid down for historical composition are those relating to the æsthetic value of digressions, the legality of employing more than one metaphor in the same sentence, and the like; and historians are ranked not by their power of estimating evidence but by the goodness of the Greek they write.

I must note also the important influence on literature exercised by Alexander the Great; for while his travels encouraged the more accurate research of geography, the very splendour of his achievements seems to have brought

history again into the sphere of romance. The appearance of all great men in the world is followed invariably by the rise of that mythopoetic spirit and that tendency to look for the marvellous, which is so fatal to true historical criticism. An Alexander, a Napoleon, a Francis of Assisi and a Mahomet are thought to be outside the limiting conditions of rational law, just as comets were supposed to be not very long ago. While the founding of that city of Alexandria, in which Western and Eastern thought met with such strange result to both, diverted the critical tendencies of the Greek spirit into questions of grammar, philology and the like, the narrow, artificial atmosphere of that University town (as we may call it) was fatal to the development of that independent and speculative spirit of research which strikes out new methods of inquiry, of which historical criticism is one.

The Alexandrines combined a great love of learning with an ignorance of the true principles of research, an enthusiastic spirit for accumulating materials with a wonderful incapacity to use them. Not among the hot sands of Egypt, or the Sophists of Athens, but from the very heart of Greece rises the man of genius on whose influence in the evolution of the philosophy of history I have a short time ago dwelt.

Born in the serene and pure air of the clear uplands of Arcadia, Polybius may be said to reproduce in his work the character of the place which gave him birth. For, of all the historians—I do not say of antiquity but of all time—none is more rationalistic than he, none more free from any belief in the ‘visions and omens, the monstrous legends, the grovelling superstitions and unmanly craving for the supernatural’ (*δεισιδαιμονίας ἀγεννοῦς καὶ τερατέλας γυναικώδους*<sup>1</sup>) which he is compelled to notice himself as the characteristics of some of the historians who preceded him. Fortunate in the land which bore him, he was no less blessed in the wondrous time of his birth. For, representing in himself the spiritual supremacy of the Greek intellect and allied in bonds of chivalrous friendship to the world-conqueror of his day, he seems led as it were by the hand of fate ‘to comprehend,’ as has been said, ‘more clearly than the Romans themselves the historical position of Rome,’ and to discern with greater insight than all other men could those two great resultants of ancient civilization, the material empire of the city of the seven hills, and the intellectual sovereignty of Hellas.

Before his own day, he says,<sup>2</sup> the events of the

<sup>1</sup> Polybius, xii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Polybius, i. 4, viii. 4, specially; and really *passim*.

world were unconnected and separate and the histories confined to particular countries. Now, for the first time the universal empire of the Romans rendered a universal history possible.<sup>1</sup> This, then, is the august motive of his work : to trace the gradual rise of this Italian city from the days when the first legion crossed the narrow strait of Messina and landed on the fertile fields of Sicily to the time when Corinth in the East and Carthage in the West fell before the resistless wave of empire and the eagles of Rome passed on the wings of universal victory from Calpè and the Pillars of Hercules to Syria and the Nile. At the same time he recognized that the scheme of Rome's empire was worked out under the *ægis* of God's will.<sup>2</sup> For, as one of the Middle Age scribes most truly says, the *τύχη* of Polybius is that power which we Christians call God; the second aim, as one may call it, of his history is to point out the rational and human and natural causes which brought this result, distinguishing, as we should say, between God's mediate and immediate government of the world.

With any direct intervention of God in the normal development of Man, he will have nothing to do: still less with any idea of chance as a factor in the phenomena of life. Chance

<sup>1</sup> He makes one exception.

<sup>2</sup> Polybius, viii. 4.

and miracles, he says, are mere expressions for our ignorance of rational causes. The spirit of rationalism which we recognized in Herodotus as a vague uncertain attitude and which appears in Thucydides as a consistent attitude of mind never argued about or even explained, is by Polybius analysed and formulated as the great instrument of historical research.

Herodotus, while believing on principle in the supernatural, yet was sceptical at times. Thucydides simply ignored the supernatural. He did not discuss it, but he annihilated it by explaining history without it. Polybius enters at length into the whole question and explains its origin and the method of treating it. Herodotus would have believed in Scipio's dream. Thucydides would have ignored it entirely. Polybius explains it. He is the culmination of the rational progression of Dialectic. 'Nothing,' he says, 'shows a foolish mind more than the attempt to account for any phenomena on the principle of chance or supernatural intervention. History is a search for rational causes, and there is nothing in the world—even those phenomena which seem to us the most remote from law and improbable—which is not the logical and inevitable result of certain rational antecedents.'

Some things, of course, are to be rejected a

*priori* without entering into the subject: 'As regards such miracles,' he says,<sup>1</sup> 'as that on a certain statue of Artemis rain or snow never falls though the statue stands in the open air, or that those who enter God's shrine in Arcadia lose their natural shadows, I cannot really be expected to argue upon the subject. For these things are not only utterly improbable but absolutely impossible.'

'For us to argue reasonably on an acknowledged absurdity is as vain a task as trying to catch water in a sieve; it is really to admit the possibility of the supernatural, which is the very point at issue.'

What Polybius felt was that to admit the possibility of a miracle is to annihilate the possibility of history: for just as scientific and chemical experiments would be either impossible or useless if exposed to the chance of continued interference on the part of some foreign body, so the laws and principles which govern history, the causes of phenomena, the evolution of progress, the whole science, in a word, of man's dealings with his own race and with nature, will remain a sealed book to him who admits the possibility of extra-natural interference.

The stories of miracles, then, are to be rejected on *a priori* rational grounds, but in the

<sup>1</sup> Polybius, xvi. 12.

case of events which we know to have happened the scientific historian will not rest till he has discovered their natural causes which, for instance, in the case of the wonderful rise of the Roman Empire—the most marvellous thing, Polybius says, which God ever brought about<sup>1</sup>—are to be found in the excellence of their constitution (*τῇ ἴδιότητι τῆς πολιτείας*), the wisdom of their advisers, the splendid military arrangements, and their superstition (*τῇ δεισιδαιμονίᾳ*). For while Polybius regarded the revealed religion as, of course, objective reality of truth,<sup>2</sup> he laid great stress on its moral subjective influence, going, in one passage on the subject, even so far as almost to excuse the introduction of the supernatural in very small quantities into history on account of the extremely good effect it would have on pious people.

But perhaps there is no passage in the whole of ancient and modern history which breathes such a manly and splendid spirit of rationalism as one preserved to us in the Vatican—strange resting-place for it!—in which he treats of the

<sup>1</sup> Polybius, viii. 4: *τὸ παραδοξότατον καθ' ἡμᾶς ἔργον ἡ τύχη συνετέλεσε; τοῦτο δέστι τὸ πάντα τὰ γνωριζόμενα μέρη τῆς οἰκουμένης ὑπὸ μιαν ἀρχὴν καὶ δυναστελλάν ἀγαγεῖν, δὲ πρότερον οὐχ εὑρίσκεται γεγονός.*

<sup>2</sup> Polybius resembled Gibbon in many respects. Like him he held that all religions were to the philosopher equally false, to the vulgar equally true, to the statesman equally useful.

terrible decay of population which has fallen on his native land in his own day, and which by the general orthodox public was regarded as a special judgment of God, sending childlessness on women as a punishment for the sins of the people. For it was a disaster quite without parallel in the history of the land, and entirely unforeseen by any of its political-economy writers who, on the contrary, were always anticipating that danger would arise from an excess of population overrunning its means of subsistence, and becoming unmanageable through its size. Polybius, however, will have nothing to do with either priest or worker of miracles in this matter. He will not even seek that 'sacred Heart of Greece,' Delphi, Apollo's shrine, whose inspiration even Thucydides admitted and before whose wisdom Socrates bowed. How foolish, he says, were the man who on this matter would pray to God. We must search for the rational causes, and the causes are seen to be clear, and the method of prevention also. He then proceeds to notice how all this arose from the general reluctance to marriage and to bearing the expense of educating a large family which resulted from the carelessness and avarice of the men of his day, and he explains on entirely rational principles the whole of this apparently supernatural judgment.

Now, it is to be borne in mind that while his rejection of miracles as violation of inviolable laws is entirely *a priori*—for, discussion of such a matter is, of course, impossible for a rational thinker—yet his rejection of supernatural intervention rests entirely on the scientific grounds of the necessity of looking for natural causes. And he is quite logical in maintaining his position on these principles. For, where it is either difficult or impossible to assign any rational cause for phenomena, or to discover their laws, he acquiesces reluctantly in the alternative of admitting some extra-natural interference which his essentially scientific method of treating the matter has logically forced on him, approving, for instance, of prayers for rain, on the express ground that the laws of meteorology had not yet been ascertained. He would, of course, have been the first to welcome our modern discoveries in the matter. The passage in question is in every way one of the most interesting in his whole work, not, of course, as signifying any inclination on his part to acquiesce in the supernatural, but because it shows how essentially logical and rational his method of argument was, and how candid and fair his mind.

Having now examined Polybius's attitude towards the supernatural and the general ideas

which guided his research, I will proceed to examine the method he pursued in his scientific investigation of the complex phenomena of life. For, as I have said before in the course of this essay, what is important in all great writers is not so much the results they arrive at as the methods they pursue. The increased knowledge of facts may alter any conclusion in history as in physical science, and the canons of speculative historical credibility must be acknowledged to appeal rather to that subjective attitude of mind which we call the historic sense than to any formulated objective rules. But a scientific method is a gain for all time, and the true if not the only progress of historical criticism consists in the improvement of the instruments of research.

Now first, as regards his conception of history, I have already pointed out that it was to him essentially a search for causes, a problem to be solved, not a picture to be painted, a scientific investigation into laws and tendencies, not a mere romantic account of startling incident and wondrous adventure. Thucydides, in the opening of his great work, had sounded the first note of the scientific conception of history. 'The absence of romance in my pages,' he says, 'will, I fear, detract somewhat from its value, but I have written my work not to be the

exploit of a passing hour but as the possession of all time.<sup>1</sup> Polybius follows with words almost entirely similar. If, he says, we banish from history the consideration of causes, methods and motives (*τὸ διὰ τί, καὶ πῶς, καὶ τίνος χάριν*), and refuse to consider how far the result of anything is its rational consequent, what is left is a mere ἀγώνισμα, not a μάθημα, an oratorical essay which may give pleasure for the moment, but which is entirely without any scientific value for the explanation of the future. Elsewhere he says that 'history robbed of the exposition of its causes and laws is a profitless thing, though it may allure a fool.' And all through his history the same point is put forward and exemplified in every fashion.

So far for the conception of history. Now for the groundwork. As regards the character of the phenomena to be selected by the scientific investigator, Aristotle had laid down the general formula that nature should be studied in her normal manifestations. Polybius, true to his character of applying explicitly the principles implicit in the work of others, follows out the doctrine of Aristotle, and lays particular stress on the rational and undisturbed character of the de-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Polybius, xii. 25, *ψιλῶς λεγόμενον τὸ γεγονός ψυχαγωγεῖ μέν, ὡφελεῖ δ' οὐδέν προστεθεῖσης δὲ τῆς αἰτίας ἔγκαρπος η τῆς ιστορίας γίγνεται χρῆσις.*

velopment of the Roman constitution as affording special facilities for the discovery of the laws of its progress. Political revolutions result from causes either external or internal. The former are mere disturbing forces which lie outside the sphere of scientific calculation. It is the latter which are important for the establishing of principles and the elucidation of the sequences of rational evolution.

He thus may be said to have anticipated one of the most important truths of the modern methods of investigation: I mean that principle which lays down that just as the study of physiology should precede the study of pathology, just as the laws of disease are best discovered by the phenomena presented in health, so the method of arriving at all great social and political truths is by the investigation of those cases where development has been normal, rational and undisturbed.

The critical canon that the more a people has been interfered with, the more difficult it becomes to generalize the laws of its progress and to analyse the separate forces of its civilization, is one the validity of which is now generally recognized by those who pretend to a scientific treatment of all history: and while we have seen that Aristotle anticipated it in a general formula, to Polybius belongs the honour

of being the first to apply it explicitly in the sphere of history.

I have shown how to this great scientific historian the motive of his work was essentially the search for causes; and true to his analytical spirit he is careful to examine what a cause really is and in what part of the antecedents of any consequent it is to be looked for. To give an illustration: As regards the origin of the war with Perseus, some assigned as causes the expulsion of Abrupolis by Perseus, the expedition of the latter to Delphi, the plot against Eumenes and the seizure of the ambassadors in Bœotia; of these incidents the two former, Polybius points out, were merely the pretexts, the two latter merely the occasions of the war. The war was really a legacy left to Perseus by his father, who was determined to fight it out with Rome.<sup>1</sup>

Here as elsewhere he is not originating any new idea. Thucydides had pointed out the difference between the real and the alleged cause, and the Aristotelian dictum about revolutions, *οὐ περὶ μικρῶν ἀλλ’ ἐκ μικρῶν*, draws the distinction between cause and occasion with the brilliancy of an epigram. But the explicit and rational investigation of the difference between *αἰτία*, *ἀρχή* and *πρόφασις* was reserved for Polybius.

<sup>1</sup> Polybius, xxii. 22.

No canon of historical criticism can be said to be of more real value than that involved in this distinction, and the overlooking of it has filled our histories with the contemptible accounts of the intrigues of courtiers and of kings and the petty plottings of backstairs influence—particulars interesting, no doubt, to those who would ascribe the Reformation to Anne Boleyn's pretty face, the Persian war to the influence of a doctor or a curtain-lecture from Atossa, or the French Revolution to Madame de Maintenon, but without any value for those who aim at any scientific treatment of history.

But the question of method, to which I am compelled always to return, is not yet exhausted. There is another aspect in which it may be regarded, and I shall now proceed to treat of it.

One of the greatest difficulties with which the modern historian has to contend is the enormous complexity of the facts which come under his notice: D'Alembert's suggestion that at the end of every century a selection of facts should be made and the rest burned (if it was really intended seriously) could not, of course, be entertained for a moment. A problem loses all its value when it becomes simplified, and the world would be all the poorer if the Sybil of History burned her volumes. Besides, as Gibbon pointed out, 'a Montesquieu will detect in the most

insignificant fact relations which the vulgar overlook.'

Nor can the scientific investigator of history isolate the particular elements, which he desires to examine, from disturbing and extraneous causes, as the experimental chemist can do (though sometimes, as in the case of lunatic asylums and prisons, he is enabled to observe phenomena in a certain degree of isolation). So he is compelled either to use the deductive mode of arguing from general laws or to employ the method of abstraction which gives a fictitious isolation to phenomena never so isolated in actual existence. And this is exactly what Polybius has done as well as Thucydides. For, as has been well remarked, there is in the works of these two writers a certain plastic unity of type and motive; whatever they write is penetrated through and through with a specific quality, a singleness and concentration of purpose, which we may contrast with the more comprehensive width as manifested not merely in the modern mind, but also in Herodotus. Thucydides, regarding society as influenced entirely by political motives, took no account of forces of a different nature, and consequently his results, like those of most modern political economists, have to be modified largely<sup>1</sup> before they come

<sup>1</sup> I mean particularly as regards his sweeping denunciation of the complete moral decadence of Greek society during the

to correspond with what we know was the actual state of fact. Similarly, Polybius will deal only with those forces which tended to bring the civilized world under the dominion of Rome (ix. 1), and in the Thucydidean spirit points out the want of picturesqueness and romance in his pages which is the result of the abstract method ( $\tauὸ μονοειδὲς τῆς συντάξεως$ ), being careful also to tell us that his rejection of all other forces is essentially deliberate and the result of a preconceived theory and by no means due to carelessness of any kind.

Now, of the general value of the abstract method and the legality of its employment in the sphere of history, this is perhaps not the suitable occasion for any discussion. It is, however, in all ways worthy of note that Polybius is not merely conscious of, but dwells with particular weight on, the fact which is usually urged as the strongest objection to the employment of the abstract method—I mean the conception of a society as a sort of human organism whose parts are indissolubly connected with one another and all affected when one

Peloponnesian War which, from what remains to us of Athenian literature, we know must have been completely exaggerated. Or, rather, he is looking at men merely in their political dealings: and in politics the man who is personally honourable and refined will not scruple to do anything for his party.

member is in any way agitated. This conception of the organic nature of society appears first in Plato and Aristotle, who apply it to cities. Polybius, as his wont is, expands it to be a general characteristic of all history. It is an idea of the very highest importance, especially to a man like Polybius whose thoughts are continually turned towards the essential unity of history and the impossibility of isolation.

Farther, as regards the particular method of investigating that group of phenomena obtained for him by the abstract method, he will adopt, he tells us, neither the purely deductive nor the purely inductive mode but the union of both. In other words, he formally adopts that method of analysis upon the importance of which I have dwelt before.

And lastly, while, without doubt, enormous simplicity in the elements under consideration is the result of the employment of the abstract method, even within the limit thus obtained a certain selection must be made, and a selection involves a theory. For the facts of life cannot be tabulated with as great an ease as the colours of birds and insects can be tabulated. Now, Polybius points out that those phenomena particularly are to be dwelt on which may serve as a *παράδειγμα* or sample, and show the character of the tendencies of the age as clearly as 'a single drop from

a full cask will be enough to disclose the nature of the whole contents.' This recognition of the importance of single facts, not in themselves but because of the spirit they represent, is extremely scientific; for we know that from the single bone, or tooth even, the anatomist can recreate entirely the skeleton of the primeval horse, and the botanist tell the character of the flora and fauna of a district from a single specimen.

Regarding truth as 'the most divine thing in Nature,' the very 'eye and light of history without which it moves a blind thing,' Polybius spared no pains in the acquisition of historical materials or in the study of the sciences of politics and war, which he considered were so essential to the training of the scientific historian, and the labour he took is mirrored in the many ways in which he criticizes other authorities.

There is something, as a rule, slightly contemptible about ancient criticism. The modern idea of the critic as the interpreter, the expounder of the beauty and excellence of the work he selects, seems quite unknown. Nothing can be more captious or unfair, for instance, than the method by which Aristotle criticized the ideal state of Plato in his ethical works, and the passages quoted by Polybius from *Timæus* show that the latter historian fully

deserved the punning name given to him. But in Polybius there is, I think, little of that bitterness and pettiness of spirit which characterizes most other writers, and an incidental story he tells of his relations with one of the historians whom he criticized shows that he was a man of great courtesy and refinement of taste—as, indeed, befitted one who had lived always in the society of those who were of great and noble birth.

Now, as regards the character of the canons by which he criticizes the works of other authors, in the majority of cases he employs simply his own geographical and military knowledge, showing, for instance, the impossibility in the accounts given of Nabis's march from Sparta simply by his acquaintance with the spots in question; or the inconsistency of those of the battle of Issus; or of the accounts given by Ephorus of the battles of Leuctra and Mantinea. In the latter case he says, if any one will take the trouble to measure out the ground of the site of the battle and then test the manœuvres given, he will find how inaccurate the accounts are.

In other cases he appeals to public documents, the importance of which he was always foremost in recognizing; showing, for instance, by a document in the public archives of Rhodes how inaccurate were the accounts given of the battle

of Lade by Zeno and Antisthenes. Or he appeals to psychological probability, rejecting, for instance, the scandalous stories told of Philip of Macedon, simply from the king's general greatness of character, and arguing that a boy so well educated and so respectably connected as Demochares (xii. 14) could never have been guilty of that of which evil rumour accused him.

But the chief object of his literary censure is Timæus, who had been so unsparing of his strictures on others. The general point which he makes against him, impugning his accuracy as a historian, is that he derived his knowledge of history not from the dangerous perils of a life of action but in the secure indolence of a narrow scholastic life. There is, indeed, no point on which he is so vehement as this. 'A history,' he says, 'written in a library gives as lifeless and as inaccurate a picture of history as a painting which is copied not from a living animal but from a stuffed one.'

There is more difference, he says in another place, between the history of an eye-witness and that of one whose knowledge comes from books, than there is between the scenes of real life and the fictitious landscapes of theatrical scenery. Besides this, he enters into somewhat elaborate detailed criticism of passages where he thought Timæus was following a wrong method and per-

verting truth, passages which it will be worth while to examine in detail.

Timæus, from the fact of there being a Roman custom to shoot a war-horse on a stated day, argued back to the Trojan origin of that people. Polybius, on the other hand, points out that the inference is quite unwarrantable, because horse-sacrifices are ordinary institutions common to all barbarous tribes. Timæus here, as was so common with Greek writers, is arguing back from some custom of the present to an historical event in the past. Polybius really is employing the comparative method, showing how the custom was an ordinary step in the civilization of every early people.

In another place,<sup>1</sup> he shows how illogical is the scepticism of Timæus as regards the existence of the Bull of Phalaris simply by appealing to the statue of the Bull, which was still to be seen in Carthage; pointing out how impossible it was, on any other theory except that it belonged to Phalaris, to account for the presence in Carthage of a bull of this peculiar character with a door between his shoulders. But one of the great points which he uses against this Sicilian historian is in reference to the question of the origin of the Locrian colony. In accordance with the received tradition on the subject, Aristotle had

<sup>1</sup> Polybius, xii. 25.

represented the Locrian colony as founded by some Parthenidæ or slaves' children, as they were called, a statement which seems to have roused the indignation of Timæus, who went to a good deal of trouble to confute this theory. He does so on the following grounds :—

First of all, he points out that in the ancient days the Greeks had no slaves at all, so the mention of them in the matter is an anachronism ; and next he declares that he was shown in the Greek city of Locris certain ancient inscriptions in which their relation to the Italian city was expressed in terms of the position between parent and child, which showed also that mutual rights of citizenship were accorded to each city. Besides this, he appeals to various questions of improbability as regards their international relationship, on which Polybius takes diametrically opposite grounds which hardly call for discussion. And in favour of his own view he urges two points more : first, that the Lacedæmonians being allowed furlough for the purpose of seeing their wives at home, it was unlikely that the Locrians should not have had the same privilege ; and next, that the Italian Locrians knew nothing of the Aristotelian version and had, on the contrary, very severe laws against adulterers, runaway slaves and the like. Now, most of these questions rest on mere probability, which is always

such a subjective canon that an appeal to it is rarely conclusive. I would note, however, as regards the inscriptions which, if genuine, would of course have settled the matter, that Polybius looks on them as a mere invention on the part of Timæus, who, he remarks, gives no details about them, though, as a rule, he is so over-anxious to give chapter and verse for everything. A somewhat more interesting point is that where he attacks Timæus for the introduction of fictitious speeches into his narrative; for on this point Polybius seems to be far in advance of the opinions held by literary men on the subject not merely in his own day, but for centuries after.

Herodotus had introduced speeches avowedly dramatic and fictitious. Thucydides states clearly that, where he was unable to find out what people really said, he put down what they ought to have said. Sallust alludes, it is true, to the fact of the speech he puts into the mouth of the tribune Memmius being essentially genuine, but the speeches given in the senate on the occasion of the Catilinarian conspiracy are very different from the same orations as they appear in Cicero. Livy makes his ancient Romans wrangle and chop logic with all the subtlety of a Hortensius or a Scævola. And even in later days, when shorthand reporters attended the debates of the

senate and a *Daily News* was published in Rome, we find that one of the most celebrated speeches in Tacitus (that in which the Emperor Claudius gives the Gauls their freedom) is shown, by an inscription discovered recently at Lugdunum, to be entirely fabulous.

Upon the other hand, it must be borne in mind that these speeches were not intended to deceive; they were regarded merely as a certain dramatic element which it was allowable to introduce into history for the purpose of giving more life and reality to the narration, and were to be criticized, not as we should, by arguing how in an age before shorthand was known such a report was possible or how, in the failure of written documents, tradition could bring down such an accurate verbal account, but by the higher test of their psychological probability as regards the persons in whose mouths they are placed. An ancient historian in answer to modern criticism would say, probably, that these fictitious speeches were in reality more truthful than the actual ones, just as Aristotle claimed for poetry a higher degree of truth in comparison to history. The whole point is interesting as showing how far in advance of his age Polybius may be said to have been.

The last scientific historian, it is possible to gather from his writings what he considered

were the characteristics of the ideal writer of history; and no small light will be thrown on the progress of historical criticism if we strive to collect and analyse what in Polybius are more or less scattered expressions. The ideal historian must be contemporary with the events he describes, or removed from them by one generation only. Where it is possible, he is to be an eye-witness of what he writes of; where that is out of his power he is to test all traditions and stories carefully and not to be ready to accept what is plausible in place of what is true. He is to be no bookworm living aloof from the experiences of the world in the artificial isolation of a university town, but a politician, a soldier, and a traveller, a man not merely of thought but of action, one who can do great things as well as write of them, who in the sphere of history could be what Byron and Æschylus were in the sphere of poetry, at once *le chantre et le héros*.

He is to keep before his eyes the fact that chance is merely a synonym for our ignorance; that the reign of law pervades the domain of history as much as it does that of political science. He is to accustom himself to look on all occasions for rational and natural causes. And while he is to recognize the practical utility of the supernatural, in an educational point of

view, he is not himself to indulge in such intellectual beating of the air as to admit the possibility of the violation of inviolable laws, or to argue in a sphere wherein argument is *a priori* annihilated. He is to be free from all bias towards friend and country; he is to be courteous and gentle in criticism; he is not to regard history as a mere opportunity for splendid and tragic writing; nor is he to falsify truth for the sake of a paradox or an epigram.

While acknowledging the importance of particular facts as samples of higher truths, he is to take a broad and general view of humanity. He is to deal with the whole race and with the world, not with particular tribes or separate countries. He is to bear in mind that the world is really an organism wherein no one part can be moved without the others being affected also. He is to distinguish between cause and occasion, between the influence of general laws and particular fancies, and he is to remember that the greatest lessons of the world are contained in history and that it is the historian's duty to manifest them so as to save nations from following those unwise policies which always lead to dishonour and ruin, and to teach individuals to apprehend by the intellectual culture of history those truths which

else they would have to learn in the bitter school of experience.

Now, as regards his theory of the necessity of the historian's being contemporary with the events he describes, so far as the historian is a mere narrator the remark is undoubtedly true. But to appreciate the harmony and rational position of the facts of a great epoch, to discover its laws, the causes which produced it and the effects which it generates, the scene must be viewed from a certain height and distance to be completely apprehended. A thoroughly contemporary historian such as Lord Clarendon or Thucydides is in reality part of the history he criticizes; and, in the case of such contemporary historians as Fabius and Philistus, Polybius is compelled to acknowledge that they are misled by patriotic and other considerations. Against Polybius himself no such accusation can be made. He indeed of all men is able, as from some lofty tower, to discern the whole tendency of the ancient world, the triumph of Roman institutions and of Greek thought which is the last message of the old world and, in a more spiritual sense, has become the Gospel of the new.

One thing indeed he did not see, or if he saw it, he thought but little of it—how from the East there was spreading over the world, as a

wave spreads, a spiritual inroad of new religions from the time when the Pessinuntine mother of the gods, a shapeless mass of stone, was brought to the eternal city by her holiest citizen, to the day when the ship *Castor and Pollux* stood in at Puteoli, and St. Paul turned his face towards martyrdom and victory at Rome. Polybius was able to predict, from his knowledge of the causes of revolutions and the tendencies of the various forms of governments, the uprising of that democratic tone of thought which, as soon as a seed is sown in the murder of the Gracchi and the exile of Marius, culminated as all democratic movements do culminate, in the supreme authority of one man, the lordship of the world under the world's rightful lord, Caius Julius Cæsar. This, indeed, he saw in no uncertain way. But the turning of all men's hearts to the East, the first glimmering of that splendid dawn which broke over the hills of Galilee and flooded the earth like wine, was hidden from his eyes.

There are many points in the description of the ideal historian which one may compare to the picture which Plato has given us of the ideal philosopher. They are both 'spectators of all time and all existence.' Nothing is contemptible in their eyes, for all things have a meaning, and they both walk in august reasonableness before

all men, conscious of the workings of God yet free from all terror of mendicant priest or vagrant miracle-worker. But the parallel ends here. For the one stands aloof from the world-storm of sleet and hail, his eyes fixed on distant and sunlit heights, loving knowledge for the sake of knowledge and wisdom for the joy of wisdom, while the other is an eager actor in the world ever seeking to apply his knowledge to useful things. Both equally desire truth, but the one because of its utility, the other for its beauty. The historian regards it as the rational principle of all true history, and no more. To the other it comes as an all-pervading and mystic enthusiasm, 'like the desire of strong wine, the craving of ambition, the passionate love of what is beautiful.'

Still, though we miss in the historian those higher and more spiritual qualities which the philosopher of the Academe alone of all men possessed, we must not blind ourselves to the merits of that great rationalist who seems to have anticipated the very latest words of modern science. Nor yet is he to be regarded merely in the narrow light in which he is estimated by most modern critics, as the explicit champion of rationalism and nothing more. For he is connected with another idea, the course of which is as the course of that great river of his

native Arcadia which, springing from some arid and sun-bleached rock, gathers strength and beauty as it flows till it reaches the asphodel meadows of Olympia and the light and laughter of Ionian waters.

For in him we can discern the first notes of that great cult of the seven-hilled city which made Virgil write his epic and Livy his history, which found in Dante its highest exponent, which dreamed of an Empire where the Emperor would care for the bodies and the Pope for the souls of men, and so has passed into the conception of God's spiritual empire and the universal brotherhood of man and widened into the huge ocean of universal thought as the Peneus loses itself in the sea.

Polybius is the last scientific historian of Greece. The writer who seems fittingly to complete the progress of thought is a writer of biographies only. I will not here touch on Plutarch's employment of the inductive method as shown in his constant use of inscription and statue, of public document and building and the like, because they involve no new method. It is his attitude towards miracles of which I desire to treat.

Plutarch is philosophic enough to see that in the sense of a violation of the laws of nature a miracle is impossible. It is absurd, he says, to

imagine that the statue of a saint can speak, and that an inanimate object not possessing the vocal organs should be able to utter an articulate sound. Upon the other hand, he protests against science imagining that, by explaining the natural causes of things, it has explained away their transcendental meaning. ‘When the tears on the cheek of some holy statue have been analysed into the moisture which certain temperatures produce on wood and marble, it yet by no means follows that they were not a sign of grief and mourning set there by God Himself.’ When Lampon saw in the prodigy of the one-horned ram the omen of the supreme rule of Pericles, and when Anaxagoras showed that the abnormal development was the rational resultant of the peculiar formation of the skull, the dreamer and the man of science were both right; it was the business of the latter to consider how the prodigy came about, of the former to show why it was so formed and what it so portended. The progression of thought is exemplified in all particulars. Herodotus had a glimmering sense of the impossibility of a violation of nature. Thucydides ignored the supernatural. Polybius rationalized it. Plutarch raises it to its mystical heights again, though he bases it on law. In a word, Plutarch felt that while science brings the supernatural down to

the natural, yet ultimately all that is natural is really supernatural. To him, as to many of our own day, religion was that transcendental attitude of the mind which, contemplating a world resting on inviolable law, is yet comforted and seeks to worship God not in the violation but in the fulfilment of nature.

It may seem paradoxical to quote in connection with the priest of Chæronea such a pure rationalist as Mr. Herbert Spencer; yet when we read as the last message of modern science that ‘when the equation of life has been reduced to its lowest terms the symbols are symbols still,’ mere signs, that is, of that unknown reality which underlies all matter and all spirit, we may feel how over the wide strait of centuries thought calls to thought and how Plutarch has a higher position than is usually claimed for him in the progress of the Greek intellect.

And, indeed, it seems that not merely the importance of Plutarch himself but also that of the land of his birth in the evolution of Greek civilization has been passed over by modern critics. To us, indeed, the bare rock to which the Parthenon serves as a crown, and which lies between Colonus and Attica’s violet hills, will always be the holiest spot in the land of Greece: and Delphi will come next, and then the meadows of Eurotas where that noble people

lived who represented in Hellenic thought the reaction of the law of duty against the law of beauty, the opposition of conduct to culture. Yet, as one stands on the *σχιστὴ δόδος* of Cithæron and looks out on the great double plain of Bœotia, the enormous importance of the division of Hellas comes to one's mind with great force. To the north is Orchomenus and the Minyan treasure-house, seat of those merchant princes of Phoenicia who brought to Greece the knowledge of letters and the art of working in gold. Thebes is at our feet with the gloom of the terrible legends of Greek tragedy still lingering about it, the birthplace of Pindar, the nurse of Epaminondas and the Sacred Band.

And from out of the plain where 'Mars loved to dance,' rises the Muses' haunt, Helicon, by whose silver streams Corinna and Hesiod sang. While far away under the white ægis of those snow-capped mountains lies Chæronea and the Lion plain where with vain chivalry the Greeks strove to check Macedon first and afterwards Rome; Chæronea, where in the Martinmas summer of Greek civilization Plutarch rose from the drear waste of a dying religion as the aftermath rises when the mowers think they have left the field bare.

Greek philosophy began and ended in scepti-

cism : the first and the last word of Greek history was Faith.

Splendid thus in its death, like winter sunsets, the Greek religion passed away into the horror of night. For the Cimmerian darkness was at hand, and when the schools of Athens were closed and the statue of Athena broken, the Greek spirit passed from the gods and the history of its own land to the subtleties of defining the doctrine of the Trinity and the mystical attempts to bring Plato into harmony with Christ and to reconcile Gethsemane and the Sermon on the Mount with the Athenian prison and the discussion in the woods of Colonus. The Greek spirit slept for wellnigh a thousand years. When it woke again, like Antæus it had gathered strength from the earth where it lay, like Apollo it had lost none of its divinity through its long servitude.

In the history of Roman thought we nowhere find any of those characteristics of the Greek Illumination which I have pointed out are the necessary concomitants of the rise of historical criticism. The conservative respect for tradition which made the Roman people delight in the ritual and formulas of law, and is as apparent in their politics as in their religion, was fatal to any rise of that spirit of revolt against authority the importance of which, as a factor in intellectual progress, we have already seen.

The whitened tables of the Pontifices preserved carefully the records of the eclipses and other atmospherical phenomena, and what we call the art of verifying dates was known to them at an early time; but there was no spontaneous rise of physical science to suggest by its analogies of law and order a new method of research, nor any natural springing up of the questioning spirit of philosophy with its unification of all phenomena and all knowledge. At the very time when the whole tide of Eastern superstition was sweeping into the heart of the Capitol the Senate banished the Greek philosophers from Rome. And of the three systems which did at length take some root in the city those of Zeno and Epicurus were merely used as the rule for the ordering of life, while the dogmatic scepticism of Carneades, by its very principles, annihilated the possibility of argument and encouraged a perfect indifference to research.

Nor were the Romans ever fortunate enough like the Greeks to have to face the incubus of any dogmatic system of legends and myths, the immoralities and absurdities of which might excite a revolutionary outbreak of sceptical criticism. For the Roman religion became as it were crystallized and isolated from progress at an early period of its evolution. Their gods remained mere abstractions of commonplace virtues or uninteresting personifications of the useful things

of life. The old primitive creed was indeed always upheld as a state institution on account of the enormous facilities it offered for cheating in politics, but as a spiritual system of belief it was unanimously rejected at a very early period both by the common people and the educated classes, for the sensible reason that it was so extremely dull. The former took refuge in the mystic sensualities of the worship of Isis, the latter in the Stoical rules of life. The Romans classified their gods carefully in their order of precedence, analysed their genealogies in the laborious spirit of modern heraldry, fenced them round with a ritual as intricate as their law, but never quite cared enough about them to believe in them. So it was of no account with them when the philosophers announced that Minerva was merely memory. She had never been much else. Nor did they protest when Lucretius dared to say of Ceres and of Liber that they were only the corn of the field and the fruit of the vine. For they had never mourned for the daughter of Demeter in the asphodel meadows of Sicily, nor traversed the glades of Cithæron with fawn-skin and with spear.

This brief sketch of the condition of Roman thought will serve to prepare us for the almost total want of scientific historical criticism which we shall discern in their literature, and has, be-

sides, afforded fresh corroborations of the conditions essential to the rise of this spirit, and of the modes of thought which it reflects and in which it is always to be found. Roman historical composition had its origin in the pontifical college of ecclesiastical lawyers, and preserved to its close the uncritical spirit which characterized its fountain-head. It possessed from the outset a most voluminous collection of the materials of history, which, however, produced merely antiquarians, not historians. It is so hard to use facts, so easy to accumulate them.

Wearied of the dull monotony of the pontifical annals, which dwelt on little else but the rise and fall in provisions and the eclipses of the sun, Cato wrote out a history with his own hand for the instruction of his child, to which he gave the name of *Origines*, and before his time some aristocratic families had written histories in Greek much in the same spirit in which the Germans of the eighteenth century used French as the literary language. But the first regular Roman historian is Sallust. Between the extravagant eulogies passed on this author by the French (such as De Closset), and Dr. Mommsen's view of him as merely a political pamphleteer, it is perhaps difficult to reach the *via media* of unbiassed appreciation. He has, at

any rate, the credit of being a purely rationalistic historian, perhaps the only one in Roman literature. Cicero had a good many qualifications for a scientific historian, and (as he usually did) thought very highly of his own powers. On passages of ancient legend, however, he is rather unsatisfactory, for while he is too sensible to believe them he is too patriotic to reject them. And this is really the attitude of Livy, who claims for early Roman legend a certain uncritical homage from the rest of the subject world. His view in his history is that it is not worth while to examine the truth of these stories.

In his hands the history of Rome unrolls before our eyes like some gorgeous tapestry, where victory succeeds victory, where triumph treads on the heels of triumph, and the line of heroes seems never to end. It is not till we pass behind the canvas and see the slight means by which the effect is produced that we apprehend the fact that like most picturesque writers Livy is an indifferent critic. As regards his attitude towards the credibility of early Roman history he is quite as conscious as we are of its mythical and unsound nature. He will not, for instance, decide whether the Horatii were Albans or Romans; who was the first dictator; how many tribunes there were, and the like. His method, as a rule, is merely to mention all the accounts

and sometimes to decide in favour of the most probable, but usually not to decide at all. No canons of historical criticism will ever discover whether the Roman women interviewed the mother of Coriolanus of their own accord or at the suggestion of the senate; whether Remus was killed for jumping over his brother's wall or because they quarrelled about birds; whether the ambassadors found Cincinnatus ploughing or only mending a hedge. Livy suspends his judgment over these important facts and history when questioned on their truth is dumb. If he does select between two historians he chooses the one who is nearer to the facts he describes. But he is no critic, only a conscientious writer. It is mere vain waste to dwell on his critical powers, for they do not exist.

In the case of Tacitus imagination has taken the place of history. The past lives again in his pages, but through no laborious criticism; rather through a dramatic and psychological faculty which he specially possessed.

In the philosophy of history he has no belief. He can never make up his mind what to believe as regards God's government of the world. There is no method in him and none elsewhere in Roman literature.

Nations may not have missions but they cer-

tainly have functions. And the function of ancient Italy was not merely to give us what is statical in our institutions and rational in our law, but to blend into one elemental creed the spiritual aspirations of Aryan and of Semite. Italy was not a pioneer in intellectual progress, nor a motive power in the evolution of thought. The owl of the goddess of Wisdom traversed over the whole land and found nowhere a resting-place. The dove, which is the bird of Christ, flew straight to the city of Rome and the new reign began. It was the fashion of early Italian painters to represent in mediæval costume the soldiers who watched over the tomb of Christ, and this, which was the result of the frank anachronism of all true art, may serve to us as an allegory. For it was in vain that the Middle Ages strove to guard the buried spirit of progress. When the dawn of the Greek spirit arose, the sepulchre was empty, the grave-clothes laid aside. Humanity had risen from the dead.

The study of Greek, it has been well said, implies the birth of criticism, comparison and research. At the opening of that education of modern by ancient thought which we call the Renaissance, it was the words of Aristotle which sent Columbus sailing to the New World, while a fragment of Pythagorean astronomy set

Copernicus thinking on that train of reasoning which has revolutionized the whole position of our planet in the universe. Then it was seen that the only meaning of progress is a return to Greek modes of thought. The monkish hymns which obscured the pages of Greek manuscripts were blotted out, the splendours of a new method were unfolded to the world, and out of the melancholy sea of mediævalism rose the free spirit of man in all that splendour of glad adolescence, when the bodily powers seem quickened by a new vitality, when the eye sees more clearly than its wont and the mind apprehends what was beforetime hidden from it. To herald the opening of the sixteenth century, from the little Venetian printing press came forth all the great authors of antiquity, each bearing on the title-page the words "Αλδος ὁ Μανούτιος Ρωμαῖος καὶ Φιλέλλην; words which may serve to remind us with what wondrous prescience Polybius saw the world's fate when he foretold the material sovereignty of Roman institutions and exemplified in himself the intellectual empire of Greece.

The course of the study of the spirit of historical criticism has not been a profitless investigation into modes and forms of thought now antiquated and of no account. The only spirit which is entirely removed from us is the

mediaeval ; the Greek spirit is essentially modern. The introduction of the comparative method of research which has forced history to disclose its secrets belongs in a measure to us. Ours, too, is a more scientific knowledge of philology and the method of survival. Nor did the ancients know anything of the doctrine of averages or of crucial instances, both of which methods have proved of such importance in modern criticism, the one adding a most important proof of the statical elements of history, and exemplifying the influences of all physical surroundings on the life of man ; the other, as in the single instance of the Moulin Quignon skull, serving to create a whole new science of prehistoric archæology and to bring us back to a time when man was coeval with the stone age, the mammoth and the woolly rhinoceros. But, except these, we have added no new canon or method to the science of historical criticism. Across the drear waste of a thousand years the Greek and the modern spirit join hands.

In the torch race which the Greek boys ran from the Cerameician field of death to the home of the goddess of Wisdom, not merely he who first reached the goal but he also who first started with the torch aflame received a prize. In the Lampadephoria of civilization and free

thought let us not forget to render due meed of honour to those who first lit that sacred flame, the increasing splendour of which lights our footsteps to the far-off divine event of the attainment of perfect truth.

## SENTENTIAE

(Extracted from *Miscellaneous Articles*)

DESCRIPTIONS of music are generally, perhaps, more or less failures, for music is a matter of individual feeling, and the beauties and lessons that one draws from hearing lovely sounds are mainly personal, and depend to a large extent on one's own state of mind and culture.

Burne-Jones and Holman Hunt are probably the greatest masters of colour that we have ever had in England, with the single exception of Turner, but their styles differ widely. To draw a rough distinction, Holman Hunt studies and reproduces the colours of natural objects, and deals with historical subjects, or scenes of real life, mostly from the East, touched occasionally with a certain fancifulness, as in the *Shadow of the Cross*. Burne-Jones, on the contrary, is a dreamer in the land of mythology, a seer of fairy visions, a symbolical painter. He is an imaginative colourist too, knowing that all colour

is no mere delightful quality of natural things, . . . but a 'spirit upon them by which they become expressive to the spirit,' as Mr. Pater says. Watts's power, on the other hand, lies in his great originative and imaginative genius, and he reminds us of Æschylus or Michael Angelo in the startling vividness of his conceptions. Although these three painters differ much in aim and in result, they yet are one in their faith, and love, and reverence, the three golden keys to the gate of the House Beautiful.

This dull land of England, with its short summer, its dreary rains and fogs, its mining districts and factories, and vile deification of machinery, has yet produced very great masters of art, men with a subtle sense and love of what is beautiful, original, and noble in imagination.

I am beginning to quarrel generally with most modern scene-painting. A scene is primarily a decorative background for the actors, and should always be kept subordinate, first to the players, their dress, gesture, and action ; and secondly, to the fundamental principle of decorative art, which is not to imitate but to suggest nature. If the landscape is given its full realistic value, the value of the figures to which it serves as a background is impaired and often lost, and so

the painted hangings of the Elizabethan age were a far more artistic, and so a far more rational form of scenery than most modern scene-painting is. One must either, like Titian, make the landscape subordinate to the figures, or, like Claude, the figures subordinate to the landscape; for if we desire realistic acting we cannot have realistic scene-painting.

With regard to the value of beautiful surroundings I differ entirely from Mr. Whistler. An artist is not an isolated fact; he is the resultant of a certain *milieu* and a certain *entourage*, and can no more be born of a nation that is devoid of any sense of beauty than a fig can grow from a thorn or a rose blossom from a thistle. That an artist will find beauty in ugliness, *le beau dans l'horrible*, is now a commonplace of the schools, the *argot* of the *atelier*, but I strongly deny that charming people should be condemned to live with magenta ottomans and Albert-blue curtains in their rooms in order that some painter may observe the side-lights on the one and the values of the other. Nor do I accept the dictum that only a painter is a judge of painting. I say that only an artist is a judge of art; there is a wide difference. As long as a painter is a painter merely, he should not be allowed to talk of anything but mediums and

megilp, and on those subjects should be compelled to hold his tongue; it is only when he becomes an artist that the secret laws of artistic creation are revealed to him. For there are not many arts, but one art merely—poem, picture and Parthenon, sonnet and statue—all are in their essence the same, and he who knows one knows all. But the poet is the supreme artist, for he is the master of colour and of form, and the real musician besides, and is lord over all life and all arts; and so to the poet beyond all others are these mysteries known; to Edgar Allan Poe and to Baudelaire, not to Benjamin West and Paul Delaroche.

There is nothing of which the ordinary English painter needs more to be reminded than that the true artist does not wait for life to be made picturesque for him, but sees life under picturesque conditions always—under conditions, that is to say, which are at once new and delightful.

Were we able to carry our *chiaroscuro* about with us, as we do our umbrellas, all would be well; but this being impossible, I hardly think that pretty and delightful people will continue to wear a style of dress as ugly as it is useless and as meaningless as it is monstrous, even on the chance of such a master as Mr. Whistler spiritualizing them into a symphony or refining them

into a mist. For the arts are made for life, and not life for the arts.

I have always been of opinion that consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative.

Mr. Whistler's Ten O'Clock, the Apocrypha though it be for the people, yet remains from this time as the Bible for the painter, the masterpiece of masterpieces, the song of songs. It is true he has pronounced the panegyric of the Philistine, but I fancy Ariel praising Caliban for a jest: and, in that he has read the Commination Service over the critics, let all men thank him, the critics themselves, indeed, most of all, for he has now relieved them from the necessity of a tedious existence. Mr. Whistler seems to me to stand almost alone. Indeed, among all our public speakers I know but few who can combine so felicitously as he does the mirth and malice of Puck with the style of the minor prophets.

The true unity of the arts is to be found, not in any resemblance of one art to another, but in the fact that to the really artistic nature all the arts have the same message and speak the same language though with different tongues. No amount of daubing on a cellar wall will make a man understand the mystery of Michael Angelo's Sybils, nor is it necessary to write a blank verse

drama before one can appreciate the beauty of *Hamlet*. It is essential that an art critic should have a nature receptive of beautiful impressions, and sufficient intuition to recognize style when he meets with it, and truth when it is shown to him; but, if he does not possess these qualities, a reckless career of water-colour painting will not give them to him, for, if from the incompetent critic all things be hidden, to the bad painter nothing shall be revealed.

In treating bookbinding as an imaginative, expressive human art we must confess that we think that Mr. Sanderson made something of an error. Bookbinding is essentially decorative, and good decoration is far more often suggested by material and mode of work than by any desire on the part of the designer to tell us of his joy in the world. Hence it comes that good decoration is always traditional. Where it is the expression of the individual it is usually either false or capricious. These handicrafts are not primarily expressive arts; they are impressive arts. If a man has any message for the world he will not deliver it in a material that always suggests and always conditions its own decoration. The beauty of bookbinding is abstract decorative beauty. It is not, in the first instance, a mode of expression for a man's soul. Indeed,

the danger of all these lofty claims for handicraft is simply that they show a desire to give crafts the province and motive of arts such as poetry, painting and sculpture. Such province and such motive they have not got. Their aim is different. Between the arts that aim at annihilating their material and the arts that aim at glorifying it there is a wide gulf.

Like Mr. Morris, Mr. Walter Crane quite underrates the art of Japan, and looks on the Japanese as naturalists and not as decorative artists. It is true that they are often pictorial, but by the exquisite finesse of their touch, the brilliancy and beauty of their colour, their perfect knowledge of how to make a space decorative without decorating it (a point on which Mr. Crane said nothing, though it is one of the most important things in decoration), and by their keen instinct of where to place a thing, the Japanese are decorative artists of a high order.

The English public, as a mass, takes no interest in a work of art until it is told that the work in question is immoral.

As regards grammar, I hold that, in prose at any rate, correctness should always be subordinate to artistic effect and musical cadence.

Romantic art deals with the exception and with the individual. Good people, belonging as they do to the normal, and so, commonplace, type, are artistically uninteresting. Bad people are, from the point of view of art, fascinating studies. They represent colour, variety and strangeness. Good people exasperate one's reason; bad people stir one's imagination.

Puritanism is never so offensive and destructive as when it deals with art matters.

I write because it gives me the greatest possible artistic pleasure to write. If my work pleases the few I am gratified. If it does not, it causes me no pain. As for the mob, I have no desire to be a popular novelist. It is far too easy.

An artist has no ethical sympathies at all. Virtue and wickedness are to him simply what the colours on his palette are to the painter. They are no more and they are no less. He sees that by their means a certain artistic effect can be produced and he produces it. Iago may be morally horrible and Imogen stainlessly pure. Shakespeare, as Keats said, had as much delight in creating the one as he had in creating the other.

I thoroughly agree that it is a pity that Goethe never had an opportunity of reading *Dorian Gray*. I feel quite certain that he would have been delighted by it, and I only hope that some ghostly publisher is even now distributing shadowy copies in the Elysian fields, and that the cover of Gautier's copy is powdered with gilt asphodels.

The chief merit of *Madame Bovary* is not the moral lesson that can be found in it, any more than the chief merit of *Salammbô* is its archæology; but Flaubert was perfectly right in exposing the ignorance of those who called the one immoral and the other inaccurate; and not merely was he right in the ordinary sense of the word, but he was artistically right, which is everything. The critic has to educate the public; the artist has to educate the critic.

It is a sad thing, but one wearies even of praise.

The kiosk is a delightful object, and, when illuminated at night from within, as lovely as a fantastic Chinese lantern, especially when the transparent advertisements are from the clever pencil of M. Chéret. In London we have merely the ill-clad newsvendor, whose voice, in spite of the admirable efforts of the Royal

College of Music to make England a really musical nation, is always out of tune, and whose rags, badly designed and badly worn, merely emphasize a painful note of uncomely misery, without conveying that impression of picturesqueness which is the only thing that makes the poverty of others at all bearable.

Mamilius is as entirely delightful as Caliban is entirely detestable, but neither the standard of Mamilius nor the standard of Caliban is my standard. No artist recognizes any standard of beauty but that which is suggested by his own temperament. The artist seeks to realize, in a certain material, his immaterial idea of beauty, and thus to transform an idea into an ideal. That is the way an artist makes things. That is why an artist makes things. The artist has no other object in making things.

I hold that the stage is to a play no more than a picture-frame is to a painting, and that the actable value of a play has nothing whatsoever to do with its value as a work of art. In this century, in England, to take an obvious example, we have had only two great plays—one is Shelley's *Cenci*, the other Mr. Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*, and neither of them is in any sense of the word an actable play. Indeed,

the mere suggestion that stage representation is any test of a work of art is quite ridiculous. In the production of Browning's plays, for instance, in London and at Oxford, what was being tested was obviously the capacity of the modern stage to represent, in any adequate measure or degree, works of introspective method and strange or sterile psychology. But the artistic value of *Strafford* or *In a Balcony* was settled when Robert Browning wrote their last lines. It is not by the mimes that the muses are to be judged.

To be conventional is to be a comedian. To act a particular part, however, is a very different thing, and a very difficult thing as well. The actor's aim is, or should be, to convert his own accidental personality into the real and essential personality of the character he is called upon to personate, whatever that character may be; or perhaps I should say that there are two schools of action—the school of those who attain their effect by exaggeration of personality, and the school of those who attain it by suppression.

There are many advantages in puppets. They never argue. They have no crude views about art. They have no private lives. We are never bothered by accounts of their virtues, or bored by recitals of their vices; and when they are out

of an engagement they never do good in public or save people from drowning, nor do they speak more than is set down for them. They recognize the presiding intellect of the dramatist, and have never been known to ask for their parts to be written up. They are admirably docile, and have no personalities at all. I saw lately, in Paris, a performance by certain puppets of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, in M. Maurice Boucher's translation. Miranda was the mirage of Miranda, because an artist had so fashioned her; and Ariel was true Ariel, because so had she been made. Their gestures were quite sufficient, and the words that seemed to come from their little lips were spoken by poets who had beautiful voices. It was a delightful performance, and I remember it still with delight, though Miranda took no notice of the flowers I sent her after the curtain fell.

Only mediocrities progress. An artist revolves in a cycle of masterpieces, the first of which is no less perfect than the last.

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Lord Arthur seized the letter from her hand.  
It ran as follows :—

THE DEANERY, CHICHESTER,  
*27th May.*

My Dearest Aunt,

Thank you so much for the flannel for the Dorcas Society, and also for the gingham. I quite agree with you that it is nonsense their wanting to wear pretty things, but everybody is so Radical and irreligious nowadays, that it is difficult to make them see that they should not try and dress like the upper classes. I am sure I don't know what we are coming to. As papa has often said in his sermons, we live in an age of unbelief.

We have had great fun over a clock that an unknown admirer sent papa last Thursday. It arrived in a wooden box from London, carriage paid ; and papa feels it must have been sent by some one who had read his remarkable sermon, 'Is Licence Liberty ?' for on the top of the clock was a figure of a woman, with what papa said was the cap of Liberty on her head. I didn't think it very becoming myself, but papa said it was historical, so I suppose it is all right. Parker unpacked it, and papa put it on the mantelpiece in the library, and we were all sitting there on Friday morning, when just as the clock struck

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